Having the Spirit of Christ

Spirit Possession and Exorcism in the Early Christ Groups

GIOVANNI B. BAZZANA

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To Giovanna,

for all our "spirited" conversations,

and looking forward to many more in the future

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Acknowledgments

The topic of this book has nagged me ever since I took up the critical study of early Christianity as a potential career many years ago. In a certain sense, the present work can be taken as a means to "exorcize" this demon by realizing that the training I had received was only capable to lead me so far and that more was needed. While I am sure that I have not been able to solve all the problems and issues connected to such a complex theme, the experience of writing this book has felt like an intellectual revolution or rejuvenation from which I may emerge with new strengths and ideas. For this, I am grateful to everyone who has accompanied me on this path, both institutionally and in particular personally.

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Introduction

Many readers of this book will have heard of the Shroud of Turin, a medieval linen cloth on which is allegedly impressed the image of the dead body of Jesus. The Shroud is preserved in the Italian city of Turin and is the object of veneration and pilgrimages, whose intensity and global reach has been on the increase in recent years. From time to time and in connection with exceptional events, the Catholic diocese of Turin—in collaboration with the office of the mayor and the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities— organizes public exhibitions (*ostensioni*) of the Shroud in the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist. The last exhibition took place in 2015—from April 19 to June 24—and it is estimated that the Shroud was seen by more than 2 million pilgrims, including Pope Francis.[1]

On June 14, 2015, when the exhibition was coming to a close, the Turin edition of *La Repubblica,* a major Italian newspaper, published a short article describing a shocking event that had apparently transpired two days earlier in front of the Shroud. According to Erica Di Blasi, the author of the piece, an unnamed woman from Lecco (a town on Lake Como, in the vicinity of Milan) was seen entering a "trance-like" state (*come in trance*) while in the presence of the relic.[2] We are told that the pilgrim pronounced "incomprehensible sentences, in an unknown language" and then fell to the ground. Other pilgrims on the scene are reported to have said that the woman "turned

her head haphazardly, in an unnatural manner. It looked like a horror movie."
After roughly ten minutes the pilgrim regained her senses and apparently
left the church without needing any additional help. The same journalist ac-
companied the main article with a short interview with a Catholic priest,
Egidio Zoia, who works as an exorcist in the diocese of Milan. Zoia expressed
doubts about the "possession" of the woman from Lecco, since he would have
expected "more vehement blasphemies" and at the very least "an attempt to
destroy the Shroud."[3]

This episode is far from extraordinary. Indeed, by focusing on the way
in which it is described on the pages of *La Repubblica,* one may note a few
characteristic traits of popular dealings with possession and exorcism. First of
all, one cannot but be struck by the clumsy exoticism that both the journalist
and apparently also the random audience used to make sense of this case of
"possession." The title of the piece is telling: "Woman Goes into Trance in
Front of the Shroud: 'The Devil Is in Me!'" Moreover, Di Blasi could not re-
sist quoting a person in the audience who indirectly equated the movements
of the woman's head with those displayed in a shocking and frightening scene
in the seminal 1971 movie *The Exorcist.* Gesturing toward an authoritative
ecclesiastical voice is also par for the course for Italian media. But the inter-
view to Don Egidio Zoia reveals another problematic aspect of the narrative.
Even the Catholic church is ill equipped to deal with possession and exorcism
when it must speak in its official, public role. On the one hand, at least since
the times of John Paul II the church has firmly and repeatedly maintained
the "reality" of possession and the need for exorcism. Indeed, it is clear that
in recent years the phenomenon of possession has been on the increase, after
it seemed to have completely disappeared from Italian Catholic dioceses in
the 1970s and 1980s. Di Blasi herself, at the end of her article, reports that in
the diocese of Milan (the largest in Italy) the number of exorcists has risen
in recent years from six to twelve. Moreover, the archbishop had to open a
specialized phone line for people reporting about their own possession or the
possession of relatives and friends. On the other hand, however, less official
ecclesiastical voices, despite the repeated doctrinal pronouncements to the
contrary, tend to assume a rationalist stance toward the phenomenon, which
is then usually perceived as a sign of backwardness, one that can safely be
classified as psychopathology requiring not exorcism but biomedical therapy.
In this perspective, it is telling that Di Blasi received from the diocese of
Milan (a bastion of enlightened Catholicism at least since the eighteenth cen-

tury) the final warning that "the phenomena that remain truly inexplicable [in terms of modern biomedicine, one would think] are eventually very rare."

Thus, what is really extraordinary in this episode is not the case *per se* or its journalistic account but the fact that *La Repubblica,* a few days after the initial article (dated June 18), published a response written by the possessed woman herself.[4] The pilgrim, who chose to remain anonymous, reacted against what she perceived to be inaccuracies in Di Blasi's piece. The woman did admit of being possessed and confirmed that her condition has been diagnosed by the experts of the possession center of the diocese of Milan. Demonic possession manifests itself—in her case—in the speaking of Aramaic (which she does not know) and in violent and dangerous movements of the body. The open letter, however, strongly emphasizes that the woman is undergoing a treatment based on weekly exorcisms and regular attendance at mass and participation in the Eucharist. The pilgrimage to the Shroud should be understood as part of this treatment and was carried out under the supervision of a team of experts from the diocese of Milan. The letter describes in great detail and in impassioned tones the internal and bodily struggle experienced by the possessed woman at the time of her decision to go to Turin as well as later, when she actually stood in front of the Shroud. Even more importantly, the woman pushed back against the misguided expectations that led some to consider her reaction inside the church "too mild" and against "the oversimplification and ignorance" through which "a possessed person can be easily labeled as crazy, sick, mad, or as a monster from a horror movie."

The extraordinary element in this otherwise very minor exchange is the singular fact that the voice of the possessed individual was actually heard. Historical accounts (and, obviously, fictional renditions) of possession phenomena are almost always shaped by (male) authors. Usually they are external observers invested in exoticizing and systematizing what they write about as historians, theologians, or ethnographers. But as soon as one changes perspective, the entire situation becomes immediately much more complex and layered. The open letter penned by the possessed pilgrim to the Shroud certainly conveys the profound pain of such an experience and the inner struggles that characterize it. However, even as simple a text as this unsettles several commonsense expectations about possession. First, it reveals that this is not a condition that can be easily dispelled through a single supernatural and instantaneous act of exorcism. Instead, the treatment for possession demands a long period of time and strenuous application of a process that involves the

participation of an entire social group and implies the deep restructuring of the very self of the possessed individual. Even more importantly, possession is not passively imposed only on subjects who are poorly educated or socially marginalized. In the case of the unnamed pilgrim to the Shroud, for instance, one is confronted with an ostensibly well-educated professional hailing from one of the wealthiest regions of Italy who manifests a good deal of awareness and agency in performing the sophisticated cultural work that falls into the category of "possession."

Such complexities have often been obfuscated in the reading of New Testament and other early Christian texts that will be the subject of this book. Selective reading has its roots in theological assumptions about the nature of "spirit possession." But—in the modern era in particular—it has also become intertwined with western ontologies and their specific understandings of the relationship between bodies and minds and the construction of human subjectivity. The main goal of the present examination is to revisit some well-known texts in order to reread them in light of a more sophisticated notion of possession. This would emphasize the cultural and religious productivity inscribed in it as well as the significance of its performative nature. A fundamental aid in achieving such a goal may emerge from a sustained dialogue with contemporary ethnographies of "spirit possession." Indeed, anthropological writing on this subject matter has succeeded in overcoming many of the biases illustrated above thanks to direct interaction with possessed individuals and observation of their rituals. To speak of "cultural productivity" with respect to possession does not mean to overlook the painful nature of this experience or to hide the fact that possession can become an instrument employed in order to oppress and abuse subordinate and marginal individuals both in the so-called First World[5] and elsewhere.[6] However, a less reductionistic understanding of the phenomena will not only produce a more adequate historical account. It will also help provide solutions for real and current problems, solutions that would not be hindered by orientalism or sensationalism and are better attuned to specific cultural and personal conditions.

SPIRIT POSSESSION IN THE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Spirit possession and exorcism played a relevant role for the early Christ groups. The truth behind such a statement can be assessed even from a purely quantitative point of view by looking at the earliest textual documents pro-

duced by these groups. For instance, even a cursory reading of the Gospel of Mark reveals that the main part of Jesus's activity before the chapters describing his passion and death is devoted to the realm of the "spirits" and, in particular, to the expulsion of these beings from a series of possessed humans.

Despite such a significant body of evidence, modern New Testament and early Christian scholarship has struggled mightily almost from its inception three centuries ago to deal in a satisfactory way with the topic of possession. To assess such a problematic state of affairs, it is enough to review the strategies by which the many scholars who have tackled the quest for the historical Jesus have managed to marginalize the phenomenon in their reconstructions of the Nazarene's biography. Thus, a safe strategy has generally been one that involves—in stark contradiction with the textual data mentioned above and with the general claims to historical accuracy—the marginalization of the phenomenon of possession.[7] Landmark books on Jesus from the nineteenth century are particularly guilty of this historical misapprehension. In texts from this era one encounters authors who (as in the case of the enormously influential Harnack) present Jesus as a supremely wise teacher of ethics for whom exorcism was at best a concession to the superstitious expectations of his own time.[8] Even when someone like the controversially epoch-making Albert Schweitzer outlined an apocalyptic Jesus unavoidably at odds with modern liberal Christianity, exorcisms remained only favorable occasions to proclaim through symbolic actions the imminent arrival of God's kingdom.[9] The mention of Schweitzer's substantially allegorical reading of Jesus's fights against demons functions as a good introduction to the second strategy deployed by New Testament scholars struggling to deal with the phenomenon of possession. Allegorizing the episodes of exorcism is certainly the most widespread way to sidestep the thorny exegetical and theoretical problems raised by such stories.[10] In this perspective, as an additional advantage, exorcisms can be mobilized to convey almost any theological or socio-political meaning. Thus, the exegesis seems to become the perfect epitome of the damning criticism leveled by Schweitzer against the questers of his time: each one of these scholars ends up with an image of the historical Jesus that is the exact reflection of the intellectual profile of the one who produced it. Thus, in the periods of reigning theological orthodoxy, exorcisms (in particular, those of possessed Gentiles, so colorfully narrated in Mark) were read as representing the liberation from sin brought to all human beings through the preaching of the gospel of justification. In more recent times and more specifically among interpreters of a more liberal bent, Jesus's exorcisms have begun to attract

socio-political meanings. Hence, these stories are now routinely taken to in-
dicate Jesus's heroic stand against imperial oppression, social marginalization,
and physical suffering.

The latter interpretive stance, in particular in its most productive and
well-grounded instances,[11] does indeed have the advantage of employing some
of the work done on the phenomenon of possession in fields other than New
Testament studies. For this reason, such interpretations do grasp something
very significant behind the narratives of Jesus's exorcisms. Nevertheless, in
general all allegorical readings fall short of conceptualizing possession and
exorcism in their own right, as autonomous and productive cultural and reli-
gious phenomena. This comes as a disappointment not only for the positivis-
tic historian confronted with the failure to make historical sense of something
that is so conspicuous within the ancient evidence. To a certain extent the is-
sues at hand are connected to the deeply engrained "isolationism" that still for
the most part cordons New Testament studies as a discipline off from other
intellectual endeavors and influences.

So, despite the undeniable presence of some positive trends, a real turn of
the tides does not seem to be taking place for the study of spirit possession
and exorcism among the followers of Jesus. Perhaps more is at stake here,
and the specific case of possession functions as a very effective indicator of
deeply rooted and unsettling problems. The likely reason behind such a dis-
appointing state of affairs is that the problems with possession go well beyond
the generic (and still regrettable) "isolationism" of New Testament studies
as a discipline. This point will be treated more extensively in the following
section of this introduction. But recent anthropological literature has high-
lighted—at the level of fundamental ontological as well as epistemological
structures—how the very phenomenon of possession calls into question basic
assumptions undergirding some western modern key notions, in particular as
far as constructions of personhood, agency, and the self are concerned. The
challenging nature of the study of possession should not come as a surprise,
once one starts taking the phenomenon seriously and not merely as a form
of mystification or, in the worst cases, theater. In this perspective, however,
the implications for the specific case of New Testament and early Christian
research have not yet been teased out in full.

Modern New Testament criticism—in its historical critical incarnation,
but also in large measure in the postmodern developments that have chal-
lenged it in recent decades—is a product of the Enlightenment.[12] As such,
modern New Testament scholarship is in turn deeply invested in those con-

ceptions of rationalism and individualism that—for better and for worse—have been foundational for the last three centuries of European and North American intellectual history. It is undeniable that this legacy has brought to the western study of early Christianity and of religion in general some real advantages: for example, the possibility of disenfranchising itself from the control of ecclesiastical (mainly Christian) institutions as well as the ability to constitute itself as an academic discipline in its own right. Nevertheless, the same legacy has generated a series of constraints, whose presence is becoming more clearly problematic at a time in which the western study of religion is faced with significant challenges. It suffices only to mention here the current call to shed in a radical way some ethnocentric foundations or to question the ties between western notions of subjectivity and the building blocks of the capitalistic ideology that now imposes an apparently unshakeable dehumanizing hegemony on our lives. Such questions are raised with particular intensity in the current anthropological study of possession, as we shall see, but their introduction in New Testament research will in all likelihood entail a radical and uncomfortable paradigm shift.[13]

That this is a necessary move for the sake of the survival of the discipline (and well beyond that) had been already raised by Rudolf Bultmann more than seventy years ago in his groundbreaking call for the "demythologization" of the New Testament.[14] There is little doubt that spirit possession should be counted among those elements that the great German exegete designated as "mythology" and considered to be fundamentally unacceptable or unintelligible for modern western readers and believers. Despite the cogency of his diagnosis, Bultmann's proposed solution to the problem has been widely criticized and rejected, most appropriately because of the alarming ethnocentrism that undermines it.[15] However, it is exactly the ethnocentrism of Bultmann's proposals that highlights the potential inherent in a different approach to the study of spirit possession as the one advanced in the present book.

Bultmann started from the assumption that the very ontology and cosmology undergirding early Christian texts could not be understood or accepted by modern European Christians.[16] However, several decades later we are bound to recognize that there is ample space to acknowledge that even among the Christians living in Europe and North America (let alone among the many more forming the body of global Christianity), this is not true. More importantly for the sake of the present argument, Bultmann's judgment is revealed as a significant instance of ideological misrecognition. For instance, John P. Meier, in the second volume of his massive *A Marginal Jew*

(where the American exegete puts the miracles attributed to Jesus under the lens of his extraordinarily detailed analysis), has a very easy time dispatching Bultmann's evaluation. Meier can assemble a host of data proving that using modern technologies and "believing" (whatever that means) in the possibility of miraculous divine interventions is a very common and entirely unproblematic combination, even in the "advanced" societies.[17] The brief story of the unnamed pilgrim from Lecco that opened this introduction can count as anecdotal confirmation of Meier's data.

Observations such as these constitute an effective demonstration that Bultmann's concerns did not reflect any objective reality. In fact, they mostly responded to an ideological construal, which is typical of western modernity. The impact of such a misrecognition is felt even more powerfully now, particularly in the claim of capitalistic and technocratic economicism to encompass the entirety of human cultural experience, including politics and ontology. In light of these considerations, Meier's actual questions, when he comes to inquire directly about the historical Jesus's miracles (including, for the purposes of the present treatment, exorcisms), are all the more anticlimactic and at the same time revealing. Indeed, Meier ends up stating that the "global question" concerning the miracles of the historical Jesus should be "modestly" restricted to probe whether the accounts reporting these supernatural events can be traced back to the time of Jesus's life or are fictional constructions of the early groups of Christ followers.[18] Unsurprising and underwhelming conclusions are not uncommon occurrences in Meier's *magnum opus,* despite its extraordinary size, but this case is very telling considered in parallel with the ideological constructedness of the modern categories mentioned above. Meier's move to consign the "truth" of Jesus's supernatural actions to the relatively sanitized realm of the theological and thus to take it away from the possibility of historical inquiry is not only—as it may appear at first sight—a consequence of his respect for the *proprium* of theology as a discipline or of his heroic resistance to the hegemonic claims of historicism. In fact, as Moore and Sherwood have noted in their piercing critique of the development of modern biblical criticism, Meier's move (similar to many others within historical criticism since the nineteenth century) can be read as a means to direct attention away from the most crucial objection raised by the earlier wave of critics against "biblical" ethics and metaphysics. In this perspective, to be concerned—as Meier and many others are—only on the origin of some narratives blatantly sidesteps the potential ontological implications of Jesus's belief in spirit possession or of his being possessed in the first place. As noted

above, Meier's shying away from addressing such crucial issues is not due to fear of slipping into awkward, potentially heterodox conclusions; Meier indeed has a very good track record on this score.[19] A truer reason is perhaps hesitancy to touch on something that might expose the gap between "biblical" and modern worldviews at a more fundamental level. Indeed, Meier is right to affirm that the quest for the "historical Jesus" methodologically is not the right umbrella under which answers to these more fundamental questions can be effectively pursued. This is the reason why the question of the "historical Jesus" will not be posed in this book and why I will look for a different way to approach our problematic nexus.

The potentially subversive nature of spirit possession is well recognized in the most recent ethnographic literature on the subject, as we will see, and it is arguably the cause behind the resistance of modern biblical criticism (with its rationalistic and individualistic genealogy going back to the Enlightenment) to deal adequately with the topic.[20] On these grounds, it becomes evident that a methodology capable of accounting in a more adequate way for spirit possession and exorcism is an important *desideratum* in New Testament studies, and not only because it would improve the critical effectiveness of the discipline as a whole. Taking spirit possession seriously in its ontological and ethical implications can contribute substantially to restore biblical criticism to its original status as a "troublesome" discipline capable of challenging and unsettling deeply engrained paradigms by exposing their collusion in the production of social inequalities and cultural discrimination.

"SPIRIT POSSESSION" IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LITERATURE

As Janice Boddy observed in an influential review article of roughly twenty years ago, the anthropological study of possession has faced the same methodological problems that have been outlined above with regard to New Testament studies. As a consequence (and in significant divergence with what has happened in the other discipline), anthropologists have tried to apply just about any methodological approach to their object of study. Thus, Boddy could state that the foreign character of spirit possession has never ceased "to hold the anthropological gaze" of western scholars and thus "has rarely missed a theoretical beat."[21] Because of this extraordinary methodological sophistication and the sheer quantity of cross-cultural studies that can now be assembled to form even a minimal database of ethnographic writing on spirit

possession, the use of anthropological literature in the present research offers two major advantages. On the one hand, it provides one with the opportunity of defamiliarize readers from some well-known New Testament stories and pericopes. The latter have been otherwise interpreted for centuries in Christian circles in ways that erase or marginalize the component of possession that should instead be central for their understanding. On the other hand, the richness of the ethnographic record enables one to "imagine" the cultural and religious contexts that in all likelihood stood behind the historical events and their transduction into writing.[22] Historical imagination is here a key element and a necessity, since the evidence at our disposal for spirit possession in the earliest Christ groups, while conveying a sense of the crucial role played by this form of religious experience within the groups' life, falls far short of providing the data necessary for sketching even a remotely trustworthy picture of the socio-cultural context in its fullness. Thus, it is one of the major claims of the present treatment that "imagination" ought to be given an appropriate (and controlled) space within the historical reconstruction.

The very sophistication of current anthropological debates surrounding the complex and controversial topic of spirit possession calls for a brief illustration and justification of the precise posture that one will attempt to transfer from anthropology to New Testament studies in the present work. An appropriate point of departure here is certainly offered by the functionalist-structuralist phase in the anthropological analysis of possession, a phase that had its period of greatest prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. The most representative contribution stemming from such decades (one whose influence is still very much felt today in New Testament research as well) is the rich and boldly generalizing volume *Ecstatic Religion* of Ioan M. Lewis.[23] Lewis was a student of Evans-Pritchard's and thus conceived his dealing with possession (and other themes) firmly in terms of the British tradition of social anthropology, with its emphasis on the relationship between cultural phenomena and social conditions. In this perspective, Lewis developed in *Ecstatic Religion* a framework for the understanding of possession that originates from the *saar* cults of Somalia (the place of Lewis's original fieldwork in the 1950s) but then attempted a generalizing interpretation on the basis of the wealth of information gathered from other literature dealing with almost all the continents and even with other historical epochs.[24] The most influential result of Lewis's analysis is certainly the suggestion that all forms of possession are organized in a twofold structure with respect to the social role of their participants and to their locations in relation to the hegemonic "moral" codes of a given

cultural complex. Thus, Lewis famously distinguishes between "peripheral" and "central" types of possession. The former envisages the participation of marginal social actors (mostly women, but also in some cases other oppressed categories, such as slaves or foreigners), and the "spirits" that figure in them are "amoral." This means that they neither uphold nor contest the hegemonic ethical norms of the society in which such possessions occur. Conversely, "central" possession is described by Lewis as involving human individuals belonging to socially dominant groups (for the most part, males). The "spirits" in play here are "moral" in the sense that they have an important role in the preservation of normative cultural codes. The "central" possession cults discussed at length by Lewis are those in which the possessing "spirits" are identified with the surviving personalities of dead ancestors. In both cases, Lewis pays great attention to the social forces that move humans to be possessed. Thus, in the case of "central" possession the obvious function is to support cultural hegemony and to stabilize social structures. More interesting and a source of great controversy is the reason that Lewis identifies behind the other type of possessions. According to Lewis, marginal individuals become possessed as a means to "get back" and to obtain small amounts of redress in the relationships with dominant groups. Thus, Lewis famously understands the often-exclusive participation of women in "peripheral" possession cults as a way to obtain material advantages or emotional support from their husbands in rigidly patriarchal societies. In practical terms, as Lewis repeats throughout his analysis, peripheral possession is accepted—albeit begrudgingly—by hegemonic groups because it does not have an actually subversive impact. Instead, it can work as a "safety valve" for the tensions that are necessarily generated by situations of inequality.

Lewis's work is almost daunting in the span of its reach, and there is little doubt that its influence has been enormous on several studies of possession in anthropology as well as in other neighboring disciplines. Its impact on New Testament studies has been equally significant and problematic. The issues raised by the use of Lewis's work particularly in inquiries concerning Jesus will be discussed. For the time being, it is worth noting that, in the decades following the first publication of *Ecstatic Religion,* a series of ethnographic publications have highlighted the limits of Lewis's models and, more importantly for the present purposes, have insisted on broadening the scope of the British author's interpretive framework. A first critical observation is that the "amoral" and secretive character attributed by Lewis to "peripheral" possession is actually mostly an ideological construction stemming from the

dominant groups. These are naturally invested in devaluing and casting suspicions on the activities of marginalized individuals within their societies. A series of ethnographic analyses of possession cults has shown that once these phenomena are examined and given attention in their own right, they appear to involve a substantial number of people who can hardly be designated as marginal. In fact, these rituals and experiences express the deep structure of a given society in all its cultural and historical complexity.[25] In this perspective, while Lewis's effort to draw attention to the analytical relevance of social conditions for the study of possession must still be considered essential, several recent anthropological studies have also tried to go further. Other scholars have been looking at the positive contribution that can come from possession conceived as a productive cultural practice and not merely as a form of reaction.[26] This intellectual move has the advantage of minimizing the risk of reductionism that is to a certain extent inherent in Lewis's approach inasmuch as it appears to cast possession in general, and the "peripheral" variety in particular, merely as a reaction to social pressures and conflicts.[27]

Instead, the present analysis will rely on a body of work like that of Michael Lambek, an anthropologist who has been dealing with the theme of possession almost continually over the past four decades.[28] Lambek demonstrated the rich potential of this practice when conceptualized as a means to reflect dialectically and ironically on social and cultural structures, as a way to know Otherness and the historical past through embodiment, or, finally, as a source of moral action and reasoning. Lambek's engagement with possession emphasizes also another characteristic that is somewhat understated in Lewis's work and that nevertheless has great relevance for the study of this phenomenon in the context of the early Christ groups. Particularly in connection with his most recent analysis of possession and ethics, Lambek has underscored more and more clearly the *ordinary* nature of the phenomenon, since possession in several cultural contexts is not necessarily associated with extraordinary or immoral practices such as witchcraft.[29] As we will see, this is an additional feature of the anthropological study of possession that has failed to be transferred to New Testament research, with damaging consequences for our discipline.

As should have become clear by now, the methodological approach to possession adopted in the present book will be heavily indebted to Michael Lambek's seminal studies of this phenomenon in Mayotte and Madagascar. Having begun his ethnographic writing in the 1970s and the 1980s of the last century, Lambek's work has been mostly influenced by Clifford Geertz, the dominant figure in North American anthropology during those decades. In

particular, Lambek has consistently insisted on an understanding of instances of possession as cultural "texts" that the anthropologist can "read" in order to detect "levels of constraints, grammars of production and interpretation, modes of representation, avenues of creativity."[30] The advantages of such an approach over the above-mentioned engagement of Ioan Lewis—inspired, as it was, by the paradigms of structuralist social anthropology—are readily apparent. Lambek did not run the risk of caging such an extremely varied phenomenon into essentializing categories and ultimately of reinscribing in a relatively uncritical way a handful of ideologically driven judgments. His textual approach is better suited to capturing the rich variety of voices that normally come to the stage in any case of possession. Indeed, Lambek aptly describes what goes on in cases of possession as a polyphony of voices singing together (even though, as we will see, from different hierarchical positions).[31]

There is little doubt that the textual approach advocated by Lambek, following Clifford Geertz's lead, presents its own difficulties. Some anthropologists have appropriately criticized it because heavy textualization might tend to downplay the strongly "lived" traits that characterize possession as a form of religious experience.[32] The risk is all the more real when such an approach is transferred to the study of early Christ groups, about which our knowledge essentially comes from evidence of a textual nature, a constraint that certainly holds true for spirit possession and exorcism, at least for the first centuries of the common era. Criticism of the use of Geertzian methodologies in the analysis of these materials is very well taken, in particular when speaking about religious experiences as "texts" leads scholars to reinscribe Western intellectualistic and rationalistic biases to the detriment of an adequate assessment of their embodied and affective character.[33]

Nevertheless, the advantages inherent in the adoption of Lambek's textual approach are too significant to abandon this methodological path completely. To be sure, some correctives are required, and it seems that a better balance might be reached by compounding the textual approach with two other paradigms. The first one pays attention to the discursive nature of the processes through which spirit possession and exorcisms are constituted as socio-cultural and religious practices and experiences. It is a well-established element of the cross-cultural study of these phenomena that what finally will come to be designated as possession regularly starts with a traumatic experience or with a more generic malaise that is often expressed in the cultural idiom of illness. From such a starting point, the establishment of the actual nature of what is going on is a matter of discussion, negotiation, and sometimes even conflict

involving the affected subject, "religious" authorities such as senior mediums or other experts, and the broader social context in which this all takes place. Thus, there is no outcome that can be teleologically prefigured, but the result of such a discursive negotiation is open to a range of alternatives: the possessing "spirit" might be judged potentially beneficial if appropriately appeased in ways that might induce it to come back to possess the host again in a more controlled fashion, or it might be deemed so negative to require exorcism, or finally the entire affair can be regarded as a "real" illness that can be attended to by means of "normal" medicine.[34] This ambiguity does not characterize only the emergent stages of possession but truly almost every step along the way. A discursive approach appears well equipped to capture this extraordinarily important trait, in particular by underscoring the multiplicity of components that participate in the construction of possession and the varied ways in which such an interaction is influenced by power and in turn constitutes it.

The previous mention of the audience attending to instances of possession and exorcism serves as a very appropriate introduction to the second paradigm that will be employed in the course of the present inquiry. The presence and the active discursive participation of an audience underscore the essentially performative nature of the religious phenomena that are to be examined here. Lambek and other anthropologists emphasize this aspect by calling the hosts of the Malagasy spirits "artists." Obviously, such a designation does not imply that all cases of possession should be judged "theater" and "fakery," as indeed an older generation of ethnographers had sometimes thought.[35] On the contrary, Lambek's bold statement aims at highlighting the aesthetic element that is foundational for the very effectiveness of possession as a cultural phenomenon. Thus, performance and ritual theory should be employed also in the examination of this topic in the early Christ groups, despite the limitations due to the survival of mere written accounts. Such an approach offers plenty of advantages: for instance, by providing an opportunity to evaluate how audiences' attitudes and responses play into sanctioning the effectiveness or the failure of a given ritual action[36] or how a performance communicates meanings through affects and not exclusively through cognition.[37]

METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

The very goal of establishing a conversation between historical study of the New Testament and contemporary ethnographic accounts of possession raises a host of methodological issues. There is no doubt that while the exclu-

sively textual nature of the sources examined here is a constraint, it does not mean that attentive philological study might not become an opportunity as well. To this effect, the landmark contribution of Fredrick Smith on South Asian possession seems to open a promising new path.[38] In his monumental work, Smith includes both ethnographic data and a careful examination of the rich Indian textual evidence. Similar to what has been sketched above with respect to New Testament studies' dealings with possession, Smith is well aware of the biases introduced both by traditional Indian intellectual stances and modern western research. In order to overcome such an impasse, Smith effectively rereads ancient texts with an eye schooled both by critical philology and ethnographic observation. An analogous approach will be attempted here. The utilization of ethnographic evidence will be controlled by way of constant attention to the Greek text of the Gospels or of the Pauline epistles, so that certain otherwise puzzling linguistic phenomena (such as the treatment of "impure spirits" or the Pauline phrase "in Christ") will in turn be contextualized on the basis of the ethnographic imagination.

Eventually, this analysis will bring to the fore an alternative intellectual genealogy for the "spirits" and the "possession" encountered in these texts, breaking away from interpretations too strictly beholden to the theological and ideological agendas set by ancient and modern authors alike. It is the hope of this writer that the present inquiry might count as an instance of the "redescription" illustrated by Jonathan Z. Smith: "It is the result of comparison across difference, taking cognitive advantage of the resultant mutual distortion. Redescriptions, at the level of data, are in the service of a second, more generic revisionary enterprise: redescribing the categories employed in the study of religion."[39] The comparison between texts belonging to the early Christ movement and contemporary ethnographies should generate the distortion needed to produce the rethinking of categories (such as "spirit" or "possession") whose use within the study of religion is too often dependent on theological assumptions in unexamined ways.

Indeed, in not many disciplinary sub-fields does so much hinge on the choice of the terminology with so many heated debates raging around it as in the study of spirit possession. In this perspective, it is worth clarifying from the beginning the terminological practices that will be adopted in the present work and the reasons for choosing them. It is easy to see that no definition can hope to fit perfectly such a complex and ambiguous phenomenon, but it seems to this writer that the choices that were made do at least assist in our understanding of the evidence instead of hindering it.

An obvious starting point for such a discussion is a definition of posses-
sion that is minimally conceived—following Janice Boddy—as referring "to
the hold exerted over a human being by external forces or entities more pow-
erful than she."[40] However, even such a short summary is deceptively simple
and straightforward, because almost any element within it could and should
be the subject of critical discussion. The first stumbling block is expectedly
constituted by the nature of the "forces and entities" at issue here. Indeed,
Boddy herself in the same article immediately went on to state that they "may
be ancestors or divinities, ghosts of foreign origin, or entities both ontologi-
cally and ethnically alien." It is clear that the term "spirits" constitutes a very
imperfect category to encompass such a variety of beings. Moreover, "spirit"
in the western Christian tradition carries significant baggage, in particular
because the strong Platonic influence leads many readers to envisage behind
the use of such terminology a stark opposition to materiality. In fact, ethno-
graphic writing—particularly in recent years—has been full of descriptions
of the ways in which "spirits" present themselves in a very "material" way in
cases of possession even beyond the key action of literally taking over the
bodies of their "hosts."[41] Furthermore, at the very least in the case of Paul, it
has become quite clear that when the apostle refers to πνεῦμα he is certainly
thinking about a material entity.[42] Nevertheless, the use of "spirit" is well es-
tablished in the anthropological literature on possession and finding an easily
intelligible substitute for it appears to be impossible. For these reasons, I will
use throughout the book "spirit" between quotation marks in order to draw
the readers' attention to the inherent imprecision of the term. Moreover, I
will also employ—interchangeably with "spirit"—the Greek πνεῦμα, since
the latter is spread throughout the literature of the early Christ groups as a
designation (in the singular as well as the plural) for a vast array of "forces
and entities."[43]

If "spirit" is a highly contested term, "possession" too has not fared better
in recent years. In particular, the anthropologist Paul Christopher Johnson,
reflecting on the historical relationship between African and Caribbean reli-
gions, has pointed out that the use of "possession" in the ethnographic writ-
ing on the history of religions begins in earnest with the modern European
"encounter" with "possession" among the peoples of West Africa.[44] Associat-
ing "possession" with Africans enabled early modern European explorers and
ethnographers to cast the peoples they encountered as defined by their infe-
rior self, diminished by their lack of control, autonomy, and individual ratio-
nality. Thus, in the writing of European intellectuals as influential as Locke

and Hobbes, the discourse of "possession" did become a strong underpinning for trajectories that did eventually lead to the ideological justification of racism, colonial domination, and—given the dire implications of understanding "possession" as the surrendering of "ownership" of one's own body and self—enslavement. Johnson's strong and disturbing arguments should give pause to anyone approaching the study of spirit possession in a romanticizing way. Indeed—as one will see repeatedly in the following chapters—"possession" does not always manifest itself as the complete surrendering of self-control but entails several alternative articulations of the relationship between "hosts" and "spirits." What ought to trouble anyone approaching such a topic is the risk of reinscribing the morally bankrupt genealogy highlighted by Johnson through the very use of "possession" terminology. Again, Lambek—in his response to Johnson's provocative analysis—offers a solution that might allow one to get out of the conundrum not by working *around* but *through* it by way of a serious and morally responsible engagement.[45] Indeed, when one attends more closely to the grammatical and semantic peculiarities of the English phrase "spirit possession," it becomes clear that it enshrines a potentially productive ambiguity. Understanding it as meaning that "spirits" possess (and as a matter of fact, control) their human "hosts" is not the only interpretive option. In fact, one might as well take the label "spirit possession" to mean that "hosts" do possess (and thus, to a certain extent, control) their "spirits." On these grounds and attending mindfully to the varied array of *passiones* that can be present in each case of spirit possession, the present inquiry will continue to use the phrase "spirit possession" as the least inadequate—even though necessarily flawed—designation for its subject matter.

In contrast to what has been written so far, there are indeed terms that will not be used in this book, even though they often happen to occur in treatments of spirit possession, in particular in studies focused on Second Temple Judaism or early Christianity. A case in point is that of "magic," a category that, for instance, has been employed in epoch-making as well as controversial attempts to address the issue of possession in relationship to the historical Jesus.[46] In this case the problems are not primarily associated with the cavalier use of later sources that is (often appropriately) imputed to Morton Smith. Indeed, he systematically employed the fourth-century Egyptian "magic" papyri to reconstruct first-century Galilean conditions. Much more significant is the criticism that has been leveled over the past two decades against the very category of "magic." Several scholars have highlighted how the modern label "magic" corresponds only in very limited and inconsistent ways to the

ancient terminology that is sometimes invoked to justify its continued use.[47] Moreover (and more damaging for the goals of the present study), it has become abundantly clear that the category of "magic" has been developed in the modern era as an oppositional counterpart to "religion." Thus, while the latter has been consistently employed to signal the "truth" of beliefs and practices, "magic" has become deeply engrained in scholarly discourses to signify "falsehood." Despite valiant attempts to disarticulate "magic" from the oppositional sets that have become attached to it, it largely remains the negative mirror image of "religion." The latter indexes, for instance, confidence in (as opposed to manipulation of) the deity or public (as opposed to secretive and private) practices. All the attempts to remedy the situation have failed to dispel the influence of such a strong bias.[48] In particular, a fundamental goal of the present study is to defamiliarize Christian readers with respect to the presence of spirit possession in their traditional narratives by way of a controlled comparison with the occurrence of similar phenomena in other religious and cultural contexts. Thus, it appears that the use of the term "magic" might result in a hindrance more than in a helpful contribution.

The issue is partially different for "witchcraft," a phenomenon that is often inappropriately conflated with "magic." In fact, witchcraft accusations are easily observable both in the ancient evidence and in contemporary ethnographic research. The overlaps and the connections between witchcraft and spirit possession are well documented and have received significant scholarly attention, for instance in Lewis's particularly valuable description of the processes and the conditions through which societies come to transfer possessions into witchcraft accusations.[49] The phenomenon has been observed also in some New Testament texts, in particular in the Beelzebul pericope that will be examined in one of the following chapters. While the positive contribution coming from such studies—for the most part reliant on Lewis's treatment—must be acknowledged, it is worth mentioning that they produce two consequences that might prove themselves damaging from a methodological point of view. First, if one follows Lewis's presentation of the social articulation of possession, witchcraft accusations are almost necessarily tied to what he calls "peripheral" forms of possession. As such, the individuals accused of being witches are by definition somehow "marginal" with respect to their cultures and their societies. One must set aside for the time being the problems inherent to Lewis's model (which have already been briefly discussed). From the vantage point of New Testament studies such a reconstruction enables scholars to fit the evidence—a little too conveniently, we might say—into the

traditional mold of a "marginal" historical Jesus heroically fighting against he-gemonic Jewish authorities hell-bent on defending a stale status quo by slan-dering their naive opponent.[50] Critical scholarship should pause to consider how tightly such a representation matches the (certainly not disinterested) ac-count of the earliest documents produced by the Christ groups. In particular, by focusing mostly or even exclusively on the accusation, such an approach provides plenty of opportunities not to talk about the actual possession of the historical Jesus or, with respect to the crucial issue of the debated Jewish-ness of the prophet from Nazareth, to use "marginality" as a means to keep describing his figure as "Jewish, but not too Jewish."[51] Even more importantly, by talking about possession only in terms of witchcraft accusations, this ap-proach risks taking the polarized and polemical nature of the accounts at our disposal as ideologically neutral and historically objective. For the case of the Beelzebul pericope, one will see that the polemical presentation is a product of redactional activity that obfuscates the more "original" significance of the episode. Indeed, the second problem worth highlighting here is that putting an emphasis on witchcraft charges seems to result in an almost complete lack of interest for the ordinariness and the cultural productivity of spirit posses-sion so strongly advocated for by Michael Lambek and other anthropologists. Such a move too often results in the exoticization and marginalization of the phenomenon that has been criticized in the opening pages of the introduc-tion. For these reasons (and because the theme has already been treated ad-equately in several contributions that will be referenced in the course of the book), we will try to stay away from too close a connection between witch-craft accusations and spirit possession in the present analysis.

Another category that is usually coupled with spirit possession in some sectors of the anthropological literature—and more and more consistently in recent years in New Testament studies as well—is that of "shamanism."[52] The scholarly discussion concerning "shamans" and "shamanism," however, is extremely complicated. Recent contributions have shown quite convincingly how flimsy is the evidentiary basis on which the notion of a "shamanic com-plex" is built and how deeply intertwined are its characteristics with modern western and Christian concerns.[53] The latter point is particularly damaging for any attempt to employ the "shamanic complex" as an effective heuristic tool for the understanding of phenomena in the early Christ groups. The risk of circular reasoning is always at hand and, while such a danger cannot be eliminated completely from any historical research, it is reasonable to try to reduce it by avoiding the use of fraught categories in the first place.[54] Thus,

more concretely, Craffert identifies the historical Jesus as a "shaman" because of his experience of death and rebirth or because of his practice of heavenly journeys. But it is worth pausing to consider if these traits fit Jesus because they are actually part of the "shamanic complex" or because they have been utilized to construe such a complex by European scholars influenced by their Christian background, as seems to be the case.[55] In sum, the present treatment will stay away from the use of categories such as "shaman" or "shamanism," since their very historical constitution leads to privileging doctrinal or mythical cognition (as opposed to the present goal of understanding spirit possession as an embodied and affective phenomenon). An additional problem is the tendency to reify the "complex" into a specific form of "religion" that would ultimately "explain" everything in the experiences of Jesus or Paul (as opposed to the stated purpose of this book, which is to focus on the productive aspects of spirit possession, but without claiming possession as an all-encompassing explanatory device).

Finally, the present treatment will make use at times of phrases such as "trance" and "altered states of consciousness" as ways to indicate the neuropsychological states of the mediums in the event of actualized possession. In many ways, these terms are themselves problematic and the objects of ongoing critical discussion, particularly in the literature that tries to bridge the gap between anthropology and neurosciences. For instance, "altered states of consciousness" is highly troublesome inasmuch as its employment tacitly reinscribes a model in which the consciousness ideologically attributed to the modern western self is taken to be "normal" and thus normative with respect to alternative forms. Thus, in the present treatment one will try to use exclusively the less fraught "trance" and merely to designate the neuropsychological state connected with possession without attempting a finer specification. Indeed, the main focus of this examination will be on the ways in which possession is experienced, negotiated, and understood culturally, leaving aside the inquiry about the neurobiological roots of such an experience. One will keep to Michael Lambek's pithy observation that possession provides a cultural context for trance just as marriage does for sex. As anthropologists are naturally more interested in marriage than in sex, the same thing should be true for possession and trance, respectively.[56]

In all likelihood, a promising category to address this complex state of affairs might be that of "religious experience," which indeed has been employed recently with interesting results in Colleen Shantz's work on Paul.[57] The present book will at times adopt this label, since the very topic of spirit posses-

sion almost forces one to try to cast a look into the "religious experience," for instance, of the historical Paul. Nevertheless, one must also acknowledge that the category of "religious experience" needs a more critical discussion in order to be better clarified and made more adequate for scholarly use, even though some recent contributions have traced a promising path towards this goal.[58] There is little doubt that "religious experience" offers the possibility of addressing some areas of concern that are unquestionably central to the present project, in particular for the understanding of spirit possession as an embodied practice and thus also as a way of knowing that escapes the boundaries of logocentrism and cognicentrism. Shantz, for instance, has a lot of confidence in the help that one may receive from the neurosciences toward a better conceptualization of "religious experience." Nevertheless, one must observe that the results of neurobiological studies can at times be vitiated by the adoption of faulty paradigms of interpretation, as in the case of the rather problematic use of "shamanism" as a universal form of "religion" in some very influential contributions.[59] One of the major hindrances to the viability of "religious experience" as a scholarly category is certainly its past use to sanction essentializing and Christianocentric constructs, justified on the basis of the allegedly unmediated and thus "true" experience of the numinous. The present treatment will try to make the most of the potentialities inherent in "religious experience" by offsetting the danger of such an essentialization through the systematic use of ethnographic materials as an interpretive key for central texts within the Christian tradition.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK

The opening chapter (*Beelzebul Against Satan*) is focused on the analysis of an extremely puzzling Gospel pericope often discussed by authors (such as Morton Smith, Pieter Craffert, and Stevan Davies) interested in the historical Jesus and, more importantly, in the possibility that he himself had been possessed. Consistent with the goal of "decentering" early Christian studies away from their exclusive concern on the elusive "historical Jesus" as a convenient shorthand for pure and normative origins, this analysis will take a different angle. A careful redaction-critical examination of the texts recording the "Beelzebul accusation"—accompanied by a controlled comparison with the results of ethnographic studies—shows that these Gospel materials preserve a much more complex and challenging representation of the dynamics of possession. In particular, the pericope describes, by employing a theological

political idiom, the diversity and conflict that characterize the "spirit" world. In such a context a medium can find a way to cope with the traumatic and empowering experience of the Other that is at the root of possession and, in so doing, to cease being a "hostage" but rather a true "host." The redaction-critical analysis will show that the earliest form of this pericope represented the performative and dialogical nature of "emergent" possession. However, the immediate developments of the oral and textual tradition already began to re-center the episode christologically (in the Sayings Gospel Q) and to cast it within a polemical frame (by reshaping the pericope as an instance of witchcraft accusation in the Gospel of Mark).

The second chapter (*A Ghost Among the Tombs*) tackles the longest and most articulated exorcism narrative in the Gospels, Mk 5:1–20. Mark and the other Gospel traditions inherited from the earliest groups of Jesus followers a conceptualization of the Otherness of the "spirits" rooted in the cultural idioms of Enochic traditions. The identity of these "spirits" as "unclean" is widespread in Second Temple Judaism and indexes the mytheme of the partial survival of the primeval giants, the ill-fated offspring of the union between angels and women. However, Mark combines such a mythological representation with pan-Mediterranean ideas about the return of certain classes of troubled dead, which are well attested in antiquity. The chapter moves from these initial observations to a more detailed analysis of Mk 5:1–20, in which the foreignness of the possessing "spirit" is further compounded by the insertion of an anti-Roman political theme. By reading the narrative of Mk 5 as a reflection on and a refraction of a ritual of exorcism, the chapter shows that an interpretation informed by the insights of anthropological literature can understand the exorcism not simply as an inverted imitation of Roman imperialism but as a means to reshape imaginatively the local structure of ethnic identities in Gerasa, a locale in which Jewish and Gentile identities had to cohabit in flux and in contrast up to the catastrophic events of the first Jewish war.

Chapter 3 (*The Last Adam Became a Life-Giving Spirit*) starts to look at the fundamental role played by spirit possession in the religious experience of Paul and of his Christ groups, beginning with their doctrinal and specifically christological elaborations. Being "in Christ" is the idiom through which Paul expresses the experience of possession by a πνεῦμα, which is identified with the risen Christ and which, through its presence in them, grants to believers salvation from the eschatological wrath and the expectation of eternal life. For Paul, Christ has achieved the state of existence designated as πνεῦμα

through his death and resurrection, an idea that was also shared by other early Christ groups, as is confirmed—albeit not without negligible difference—by an examination of a key section in the *Shepherd* of Hermas.

The fourth chapter (*If One Does Not Have the Spirit of Christ, He Does Not Belong to Him*) attends to the social and ethical functions of the religious experience of possession in the Pauline groups. Recent ethnographic literature has illustrated how spirit possession can have a truly "productive" role in shaping social structures, ways of knowing, moral agency, and even the formation of individual subjectivities. This chapter will show that these same traits are recognizable in the Pauline Christ groups. Specific attention will be given to the forms in which possession enables a *poiesis* (in Michael Lambek's words) of the past. The sense of temporality underlying such an experience is remarkably different from the archival and academic study of history typical of western modernity. Through his very embodiment of the πνεῦμα of Christ Paul (and arguably the other members of his groups) could make the person of Christ *present* in a way that affectively and effectively informed not only their remembrance of and interaction with the past but also their moral agency and even their subjectification as Christ believers.

The final chapter (*Will They Not Say That You Are Out of Your Mind?*) will deal more closely with the performative nature of possession, since this phenomenon's effectiveness and validity is constantly generated and supported through a triangular negotiation involving mediums, "spirits," and their audiences. Such a negotiation spills beyond the boundaries of the performance *per se* to inform conversations among practitioners and participants that, in turn, contribute to the construction of identities, forms of authority, and social structures. The chapter will attend closely to the argument developed by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 as an instance of this negotiation about the "correct" performance of a possession ritual.

Beelzebul Against Satan

EXORCIST SUBJECTIVITY AND SPIRIT POSSESSION IN THE REPRESENTATION OF JESUS

The bulk of the following chapter is devoted to a close analysis of the "accusation" directed against Jesus for performing his exorcisms through a special connection with Beelzebul. This is an extremely puzzling Gospel episode, often discussed by authors (such as Morton Smith, Pieter Craffert, and Stevan Davies) interested in the historical Jesus and, more importantly, in the possibility that Jesus himself was once possessed. This analysis will take a different angle, with the goal of "decentering" early Christian studies from their exclusive concern on the historical Jesus. Indeed, the latter too easily becomes a convenient shorthand for pure and normative origins.

The chapter will present a careful redaction-critical examination of the texts recording the "Beelzebul accusation," accompanied by a controlled comparison with the results of ethnographic studies. This will show that these Gospel materials preserve a much more complex and challenging representation of the dynamics of possession. Moreover, the present examination will indicate how unsatisfying it is to read the Beelzebul pericope merely as an instance of witchcraft accusation fueled by envy regarding Jesus's supernatural power. Such a reading vastly undersells the historical and theological significance of the material. On the contrary, the episode preserves a valuable record of the discursive path through which the early Christ believers represented the unsettling as well as empowering experience of possession.

Such a path was deemed essential in order to "build" the subjectivity of an exorcist.

THE LANGUAGE OF "SPIRITS" AND "SPIRIT" POSSESSION

A major aim of this inquiry is to initiate a process of defamiliarization from current mainstream readings of early Christian possession and exorcism narratives. Thus, it seems appropriate to begin with the terminology that is commonly encountered in scholarly and popular writing on this subject matter. Our two earliest sources on the exorcistic activity of Jesus are the Gospel of Mark and the lost document that was used by Matthew and Luke and that will be designated as the Sayings Gospel Q. In both of these writings the terms used to indicate spirits that enter and can control human beings are quite varied. Thus, they hardly offer a basis for the establishment of a fully formed demonological system. Despite their relatively rare occurrences in the two above-mentioned sources,[1] terms such as δαιμόνιον have become—through their transliteration into Western languages—the "official" designation for "demons." The latter are understood as thoroughly negative beings intent on harming humans by seizing control of their bodies.

Such "negative" pattern of use is quite idiosyncratic to Mark and Q and differs from the common nuance given to these terms by contemporary authors.[2] In fact, words that belong to the lexical domain of δαίμων occur quite often and with neutral value in Greek texts of the Hellenistic and the early Roman periods. These terms refer primarily to beings, objects, or even events that—for a variety of reasons—can be labeled "divine."[3] Thus, in some very early occurrences the term δαίμων can even be employed to indicate a god. In general its most distinctive character is that of being morally indeterminate in a way that appears quite appropriate for Greek (or, generally speaking, ancient) conceptions of the divine. Thus, δαίμων can be used to designate the entity that famously and positively assists Socrates but also other intermediate superhuman beings whose impact on human events can be catastrophic.[4]

In some publications on the materials considered here, one can still encounter the argument that New Testament authors purposefully and systematically avoided the use of the "positive" δαίμων and instead employed only the "negative" δαιμόνιον. Quite often this assumed lexical preference is interpreted as the evidence of a New Testament adherence to a "biblical" (or "Palestinian") linguistic and conceptual habit over against a "Hellenistic"

one. Unfortunately, such a conclusion is not supported by the data at our disposal when one considers the linguistic habit of other Jewish authors of the first century CE or of later Christian writers. For instance, it is important to evaluate the preferences of both Philo and Josephus.[5] The Alexandrian philosopher indeed treats the adjective δαιμόνιος as indicating something divine, sometimes even using it in parallel with θεῖος.[6] On the other hand, the same Philo can employ the supposedly "positive" δαίμων to designate the vengeful spirits of the dead.[7] The same lexical uses are even more evident in the works of Josephus. Thus, one can encounter occurrences of δαίμων to designate vengeful ghosts, as in Philo,[8] or even "demons" that can be sent away by recourse to Solomon's fabled exorcistic expertise.[9] In turn, Josephus can employ δαιμόνιον to refer to divine impulses, be they directed to good or to bad ends. Thus, the gift of "prophecy" that is granted to John Hyrcanus consists in the fact that ὡμίλει γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ δαιμόνιον ("the demonic principle conversed with him"),[10] while what caused a soldier of Titus's army to set the Jerusalem Temple on fire is identified as coming from δαιμονίῳ ὁρμῇ τινι ("a certain demonic fury").[11] Likewise, several texts produced within the Christ groups and not included in the New Testament canon do not seem to know or follow the alleged distinction between "positive" δαίμων and "negative" δαιμόνιον. Thus, the second-century Acts of John, in which the exorcistic powers of the apostle play a central role, do not hesitate to identify the defeated demons as δαίμονες. For instance, in the long exorcistic prayer recited by John in the temple of Artemis in Ephesus that ultimately results in the destruction of the building, the apostle notes that the mention of God's name can make "every idol and every demon, every power and every impure nature" flee.[12] Later on, in an even longer exorcistic prayer directed against Fortunatus, who had been raised from the dead but did not covert to John's faith, the apostle goes through a series of designations for the devil, one of which is "stock that has a demon as reason."[13]

These terminological observations run counter to the often-repeated assumption that the Jesus movement introduced a significant polarization in demonology as well as in other ancient religious beliefs.[14] In fact, David Frankfurter may well be right in suggesting that such a picture—at the very least for the early stages of the Christ movement—is too dependent on later dogmatic systematizations of apologists and theologians.[15] On the contrary, the earliest texts conceive of spirits as powerful beings that "oscillated, or had the potential to oscillate, between beneficial and malevolent functions," as happened for the Jewish and Greco-Roman materials from the same time

period.[16] Such representation is definitely more consistent with the observations of anthropologists studying spirit possession in diverse cultural contexts. In almost all cases it is recognized that a fairly common feature is the "moral" indeterminacy of the emergent experience of the "spirits." The latter are conceived as powerful and capricious beings. Thus, a large part of the cultural and religious practices surrounding possession phenomena is designed to identify the spirits, to establish whether they can be helpful (or ought to be exorcized), and finally to adopt the appropriate techniques that enable the community or the individuals to extract benefits from them.[17]

One might expand upon Frankfurter's observations on the "uncertain" nature of the early Christ movement's demonology. Indeed, besides their ambiguous "spirit" terminology, some of the materials included in Mark and Q also have a remarkably puzzling way of indicating the mechanics of the relationship between human and spiritual beings. Traditional exegeses of these passages regularly understand this relationship as being one of complete control—indeed, "possession"—exercised by the demon on its human host. This exegetical commonplace is based mostly on the later Christian dogmatic understanding of the respective ontological places occupied by demons and humans in the order of creation. This set of theological ideas had a significant influence on the development of anthropological concepts as well, as we shall see below. Nevertheless, once more it is important to note that such exegetical and theological conclusions are hardly supported by the textual data at our disposal.

In particular, Mark often employs a phrase that proves to be quite problematic for the interpreters of the second Gospel. Both in the first exorcism performed by Jesus in a synagogue in Capernaum (Mk 1:23) and in the longest exorcism narrative of the entire Gospel, which takes place in Gerasa (Mk 5:2), the exorcist is confronted with two men who are described as being ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (literally, "in an impure spirit").[18] Such a phrase does not sit well with the idea of human hosts controlled by the spirits, but neither does it make sense from a purely grammatical standpoint. A common solution advanced by commentators is that of imagining the influence of a Semitic background. This strategy is often applied in the case of Mark's Greek, since the quality of the latter is quite poor, and Christian interpreters are often invested in making the Gospel look linguistically "Jewish" in order to push it as close as possible to the historical Jesus.[19] However, in this as in several other cases within the Gospel, hypothesizing an alleged Semitic influence is unnecessary, since most linguistic phenomena apparent in Mark can be

adequately explained as traces of "popular" Koine Greek. A controlled comparison with similar evidence in Egyptian documentary papyri has proved decisive since the time of the initial explorations of Adolf Deissmann and James Hope Moulton. The latter in particular observed almost a century ago that the particle ἐν had become a "maid-of-all-jobs"[20]—meaning that in the Koine period the particle ἐν had lost much of its specific link to spatial indexicality. Instead, the particle had become something that speakers and writers used freely to establish any connection between verbs and predicates, more often than not even in cases in which "regular" Greek would have required a simple dative. In the long run, this development brought about the disappearance of ἐν in Byzantine Greek, but for the Koine period the particle was used with a wide range of functions, which we now have to adjudicate appropriately in light of the overall textual context.

Documents from Egypt attest to at least two ways in which ἐν occurs in documentary papyri, ways that can be evaluated as potential parallels for the Markan ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ. Sometimes the particle is employed to indicate the condition or the state in which someone or something is found.[21] Such usage is easily explained as an expansion of the original locative function of ἐν followed by a dative. This explanation fits very well for some Markan passages, such as the reference to the "woman *in* an issue of blood" (ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος) in 5:26, a text situated not far from the episode of the Gerasene demoniac. The opportunity of equating demonic possession and a "biomedical" ailment such as that of the hemorrhaging woman is intriguing. Such "confusion" (at least from a Western perspective) of plans has parallels in other Gospel traditions, which are reminiscent of the cross-culturally widespread habit of describing initial spirit possession using the idiom of illness.[22] However, there appears to be a second Koine use of ἐν followed by a dative that may fit the Markan case examined here. Indeed, there are passages in documentary papyri in which the particle functions in ways that are virtually indistinguishable from those of a simple instrumental dative in classical Greek texts.[23] In such instances, ἐν seems to perform the functions that other Greek texts attribute to the prepositions σύν or μετά.[24]

Whether one thinks that the Markan phrase ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ is better explained either as an indication of condition or as an instrumental/ locative, it is clear that neither option can be completely satisfactory. In particular, it seems impossible to construe such a phrase as referring to a "possession" in the sense of the human hosts being completely controlled by the spirits. For there are several other pieces of evidence—both in Mark and in

Q—that indicate that these texts (or at the very least, the traditional materials that have been preserved in them) envisage a much more complex relationship. They employ ἐν followed by a dative as a sort of placeholder, suggesting a much more indeterminate connection. A most significant indicator occurs at the very beginning of the Gospel (Mk 1:7–8), when Mark relates John the Baptist's announcement of the arrival of "one stronger" than him, who will baptize the people not "with water" but "in the holy spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ).[25] In this verse "water" is clearly treated as a pure tool in the performance of the baptismal ritual (and thus a simple dative is used for it). The "holy spirit" is expected to participate in the new form of the ritual in a significantly different way. This participation is imagined as remarkably similar to the way in which "impure spirits" are connected to human hosts in other places within the Gospel.[26] Furthermore, the impression of complexity and indeterminacy in the relationship between spirits and human hosts is confirmed by the phrase that Mark uses most often—as an alternative to ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ—to describe such a connection. In the two remaining exorcism narratives within the second Gospel (that of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter in 7:25[27] and that of the youth afflicted by a mute spirit in 9:17[28]), both demoniacs are designated as "having a spirit."[29]

By looking at this issue from a cross-cultural perspective, the picture becomes even clearer. Indeed, most anthropological descriptions of possession phenomena in different cultural contexts show that "possession" is far from a one-way street, as commonly assumed in the exegesis of New Testament passages. Such observations do not imply that possession episodes should then be treated as "illusions" in which mediums and hosts merely "fake" the presence of controlling spirits. Trance remains a phenomenon whose "truth" is supported by significant experiential proof. Nevertheless, trance is also always concretely instantiated in cultural terms that are both similar and divergent in different cultural contexts. How these varied scripts are played out in their striking assortments of socially constructed paradigms and individual creations is a most interesting topic of research.[30] With this in mind, anthropologists are currently driven to question the very appropriateness of using the language of "possession" to describe and study the phenomena discussed here.

In a recent and learned contribution, Paul Christopher Johnson has traced the genealogy of "spirit possession" within the western anthropological tradition back to its modern roots. The category seems to gain traction precisely at the moment when European explorers "encountered" (or "reencountered," since spirit possession had in fact never disappeared from Europe)

these phenomena in Africa and South America.[31] The very idea of "spirit possession" played a relevant role in shaping the thought of intellectuals such as Locke and Hobbes. It was almost decisive for their effort to construct a modern personhood in full possession of both agency and free will as the cornerstone for the establishment of a rational "religion" separated from the domains of politics and economics. Against such a background, in the same way that European Christianity had to be "cleansed" of its medieval traits of "enthusiasm," African cults and their filiations in the Americas similarly became the chronotope of peoples unable to control their selves and thus unable to build solid political governments and ultimately to "own" themselves. In his conclusions, Johnson illustrates how such intellectual developments authorized the mass enslavement of Africans. His is a powerful warning of the danger of anthropology's reinscription of such a hegemonic discourse if the genealogy of "spirit possession" is not worked *through* but merely *around.*

Johnson's observations carry great weight—all the more so for any inquiry on the presence of spirit possession within the New Testament, certainly the foundational text for any western modern-era project of construction of personhood and political theology. Johnson's call for genealogical mindfulness resonates with our preceding remarks on the failure of the early Christ groups' writings to describe possession neatly as the spirits' absolute control of their human hosts. Indeed, in his response to Johnson's provocative proposals, Lambek notes that because of its ambiguous grammatical nature, the very label "spirit possession" provides the opportunity to question whether the spirit possesses the host or the host possesses the spirit.[32] It is such remarkable flexibility that may enable scholars working on spirit possession to break away from entrenched western categorizations such as those that connect agency and intentionality or that reinscribe the mind/body binary.

Johnson very appropriately highlights the blurred and sometimes certainly worrisome relationship between the discourses of spirit possession and slavery in the context of Afro-Atlantic religions.[33] But it is this very ambiguity that may keep the metaphor alive and productive for further research. Indeed, once one recognizes the broad array of meanings that can be covered by the label "spirit possession," it becomes clear that this is indeed the most appropriate category to grasp what is going on in Mark and Q. In these texts descriptors range from the apparently very active "having a spirit" all the way to "being in a spirit" and to "being demonized" (δαιμονιζόμενος). The recognition of such fundamental ambiguity also enables us to move beyond the impasse caused by another stark scholarly binary. Scholars have at times

understood Jesus either as someone "in possession of" a spirit (an interpretation usually ascribed to Morton Smith)[34] or as someone "possessed by" a spirit (a proposal put forth by Stevan Davies in explicit opposition to Smith.)[35] Peter Craffert is certainly right in pointing out that such a sharp dichotomy is vitiated by its being entirely reliant on western notions of mind/body opposition and intentional agency whose limitations have been pointed out above. Craffert suggests that one ought instead to take the experience of spirit possession as the occasion to construct and explore a different form of subjectivity, one connected to a radically different cultural and social script.[36]

JESUS AND BEELZEBUL: THE "ACCUSATION"

By way of a close terminological analysis on the Greek text of some Gospel episodes one can see that the presentation of "spirits" there is quite ambiguous, both with respect to their moral nature and their relationship with their hosts.

The episode in which most of the preceding observations on the fluid nature of spirit possession come to fruition in the New Testament material is certainly that of the "Beelzebul accusation." This is a pericope that appears in different forms in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Mk 3:22–27; Mt 12:22–29[37]; Lk 11:14–22). The three versions are at the same time so closely parallel and so divergent that the most convincing explanation of their literary relationship rests on the hypothesis that Matthew and Luke employed a model (Q) significantly different from Mark.[38] This leads the majority of scholars to presuppose two independent versions of the same episode (one extant in Mk 3:22–27 and the other, Q, reconstructed from the comparison of Matthew and Luke).

Furthermore, most scholars tend to consider the "Beelzebul accusation" as one of the materials related to Jesus's biography that has the highest likelihood of being historical. However, an analysis of the historical Jesus as exorcist and/or possessed has already been conducted in several important studies and thus is not a central concern of the present treatment. More interesting (and relatively neglected) in critical scholarship is the task of examining the pericope in order to understand how the earliest Christ groups—who transmitted and put into writing these traditions—conceptualized possession and exorcism. That being said, even the briefest review of the debates concerning the historical "authenticity" of the Beelzebul accusation highlights how open scholars are to recognize the historicity of the charge. However, things

become immediately much more controversial when they are faced with the possibility of taking the next step. It appears very difficult to entertain the idea that the accusation might tell us something about the actual exorcistic practice of the historical Jesus. Despite a few exceptions in the work of authors who have already been mentioned above (mainly Smith, Davies, and Craffert), scholars usually demur.[39] In part, this reaction is motivated by previous scholarly misuse of the Beelzebul episode. For instance, the "accusation" has been combined with the eminently unhelpful category of "magic," as in the case of Smith's notoriously provocative proposals. Nevertheless, it is also problematic to accept the presence of spirit possession in the very activity of Jesus of Nazareth since it will challenge some of those western ontological and ethical assumptions that form the foundation of several Christian dogmatic tenets.

A crucial step in order to go beyond this problematic stalemate is to clarify a couple of important points concerning the redactional framing of the pericope. Of what is Jesus being truly accused? And what is the appropriate way to identify the characters from whom the charge stems? I begin with a few remarks on the complex nature of the accusation, but a definitive answer to these questions will be possible only at the end of this chapter, after an examination of the entire pericope.

At first sight Mark and Q seem not to agree completely on the starting point:

Mk 3:22 Καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια.[40]

"And the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said 'he has Beelzebul' and 'he throws the demons out in the chief of the demons.'"

Q 11:15 Τινὲς δὲ εἶπον: ἐν Βεελζεβοὺλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια.[41]

"Some said 'He throws the demons out in Beelzebul, the chief of the demons.'"

At first sight it might appear that Mark is envisioning two different charges directed against Jesus, while Q seems to know only about a single one. In the case of Mark, the difference between the two accusations does not appear to amount simply to a potential split between "Beelzebul" and the "chief of the demons." In fact, the author of the second Gospel says at first that Jesus

"has" Beelzebul and then that he performs his exorcisms "in" the chief of demons.

Ultimately, as in many other cases, it is probably impossible to establish which accusation was the most "original." However, it is worth noting that most exegetes agree that the doubling of the charges ought to be considered the product of a Markan redactional intervention.[42] Indeed, when one examines the extended context of the pericope in the second Gospel, it is easy to see that Mark has created a coherent narrative unit that stretches from 3:20 to 3:35. In distinctive Markan fashion, this unit has the literary shape of a "sandwich" with a central sub-section (our "Beelzebul controversy" spanning vv. 22–30) bookended by two mirroring confrontations between Jesus and his family in verses 20–21 and later escalated in verses 31–35. Such literary construction is also employed elsewhere by the author of Mark and serves the purpose of heightening the tension of the conflict between Jesus and his family to the point of their final rejection in verse 35 ("For whoever does the will of God, such a person is my brother and sister and mother"). As far as the discussion of the Beelzebul pericope is concerned, it is important to note that the contrast begins in verse 21, when the "relatives of Jesus" (οἱ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ) go out to "restrain" him, claiming that he is "out of his mind" (ἐξέστη). What the latter claim really implies is a hotly debated topic.[43] Here, however, it suffices to note that even if the verb is taken to indicate "madness," illness of a psychological nature is often used cross-culturally (and certainly in the Markan context, as illustrated by the case of the Gerasene demoniac in chapter 5) as an idiom to describe spirit possession. Thus, Mark's reference to the charge of "madness" coming from Jesus's family in verse 21 could well have led the author of the Gospel to create a connection with the "Beelzebul controversy." Mark could have doubled the charge that he had found in the tradition shared with Q and shifted the name of Beelzebul away from its apposition "chief of the demons."

An even more intriguing issue is related to the relationship between the two different phrases used in Mk 3:22. Assuming that Beelzebul is also the "prince of demons," as is said in Q, what does it mean to state that Jesus "has Beelzebul" or that he operates his exorcisms "in Beelzebul"? It goes without saying that the first phrase seems to imply that Jesus is in control of Beelzebul, while the second one is simply puzzling. The use of the Greek particle ἐν in reference to spirits has been discussed above. It is certainly significant that Mark employs the same phrase repeatedly in his Gospel in order to indicate that humans are "possessed" by impure or evil πνεύματα. It appears that the

Markan double statement is indicating that Jesus both "possesses" and "is possessed by" Beelzebul.

How is this possible? The previous reading of ethnographic reports on spirit possession has revealed that these two statements might in fact be less contradictory than they appear at first. Indeed, most anthropological descriptions of possession phenomena in different cultural contexts show that "possession" is far from a one-way street, as commonly assumed in the exegesis of New Testament passages such as the Beelzebul pericope. If that is accepted, then it is worth considering a couple of implications that can be derived from this observation. First, the "oscillating" demonology that has been illustrated above was not a phenomenon limited to Mark. Indeed, Q 11:15 presents the same puzzling grammatical construction (Jesus performs his exorcisms ἐν Βεελζεβούλ) that has been discussed at length in a previous section.[44] If that is the case, in all likelihood the underlying concept of a fundamentally ambivalent world of the spirits ought not to be considered a creation of Mark but something that goes back much earlier, possibly to the earliest stages of the Jesus movement. This observation leads in turn to the second preliminary remark. Indeed, the charge originally associated with the Beelzebul pericope seems to have concerned the controversial identity of the spirit helping Jesus in his exorcisms. Thus, it is clear that Jesus is represented as defeating demons by virtue of his own spirit possession. Such a conclusion is shared by a majority of the scholars who have worked on the Beelzebul pericope,[45] even though only a few of them state it clearly.[46]

Indeed, the anthropological literature on exorcism and other therapies designed to dispel or reduce the unwelcome effects of the "illness" generated by the "spirits" shows this quite clearly. In the majority of cases exorcists or healers have experienced similar conditions themselves and often must be in a state of possession in order to operate to the benefit of their patients. Such phenomena are attested cross-culturally in numerous ethnographic reports ranging from the African *zar* and *bori* cults to the cases of Central Asian shamans. Indeed, these healers and exorcists have to go through a taxing and frequently painful training that—as we will see—enables them not only to "harness" the power of unruly spirits but also to restructure their own subjectivity to serve their communities.

Such utilization of ambivalent "spirits" toward goals that can be described as "positive" is not something that can be derived only from a cross-cultural comparison. Indeed, we have already seen that David Frankfurter has been able to show that this was more or less the norm both in the Jewish and Greco-

Roman environments in which the Christ movement began its course. For the purposes of the present inquiry, it will suffice to mention a couple of examples drawn from early Christian literature in which ambivalent or outright evil spirits are put to "good use." In the already mentioned Acts of John, the apostle announces the imminent death of the evil Fortunatus by referring to the divination that he has received from a vaguely referenced "spirit" somehow inhabiting him (Ἀδελφοί, πνεῦμά τι ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐμαντεύσατο).[47] The use of the simple πνεῦμα in association with the verb μαντεύω (which Christian texts usually avoid because of its potential connection to Gentile divination) leads to the conclusion that what is presupposed here is John's control and then utilization of the ambiguous power of a spiritual being. Indeed, spirit possession as a means of divination is something that is present elsewhere in the Acts of John. This happens again in the paradoxical episode of an unnamed Ephesian, who leaves the corpse of a relative of his (a deceased priest of Artemis) literally at the door in order to be able to attend a meeting of the Christ group unencumbered. The apostle John is said to have known about this while ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, a phrase that cannot fail to recall those seen above in Mark and Q.[48]

Another telling example comes from a Greek narrative fragment that François Bovon and Bertrand Bouvier discovered a few years ago in an eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscript preserved in the Vatican Library in Rome.[49] In this case the main character is Peter, and the two editors of the fragment suggest that it might originally have been part of the now lost first half of the second-century Acts of Peter. The apostle is in the region of Azot and, while on the road in the evening hours (ὥραις ἐσπεριναῖς), encounters the "chief of demons together with seven of his servants" (ὁ ἄρχων τῶν δαιμόνων μετὰ καὶ ἄλλων ἑπτὰ τῶν διακονούντων αὐτῷ). Interestingly, the chief demon is disguised as an archangel and provocatively challenges Peter, saying that the apostle would recognize him if he had the "spirit of God" in him (εἰ γὰρ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἦν ἐν σοί, ἐγίνωσκες ἄν τίνες καὶ πόθεν ἐσμέν).[50] Peter rises to the challenge by recognizing—through inspiration—that the archangel is indeed the snake who tempted Eve in the garden. It is interesting to note how the text describes the process through which the apostle comes to know the identity of his demonic adversary. The Greek states that Peter συνῆκεν τῷ πνεύματι, which could certainly be translated as "understood through the spirit" (again unqualified, as in the passage from the Acts of John mentioned above). But the phrase literally means that Peter "came together with a spirit," possibly indicating an episode of spirit possession that enables the apostle to go beyond normal human knowledge as in the just-mentioned

case of John and the body of the deceased Artemis priest. Immediately, Peter performs an apotropaic ritual that is described in very interesting terms: the apostle traces the sign of the cross over his own body while invoking the name of Jesus Christ. After this, he also traces the sign of the cross "around" the demons in order to imprison them (καὶ ποιήσας χαραγμὴν σταυροῦ καὶ περιχαράξας τὸν ἄρχοντα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ δαίμονας).[51] Then Peter blackmails the demons, threatening to keep them imprisoned unless they reveal their true identities to him. The "chief-demon" is the first one to fall; he admits to being the snake who tempted Eve, an admission that leads him to recount all the other evil actions that he had performed—in a sort of inverse history of salvation—from the Garden of Eden down to being the inspiration for Judas's betrayal of Jesus. The other demons follow the same pattern of confessing their nature as spiritual beings associated with specific vices and sins, ranging from generic "wickedness" (πονηρία) to "adultery" (μοιχεία) and "greed" (φιλαργυρία). Peter keeps the demons trapped inside his circle for seven days, but finally their chief lets him know that he cannot forbid them to tempt human beings forever. Theirs is an activity that has been sanctioned by Christ himself (κατὰ συγχώρεσιν Χριστοῦ) in order to distinguish the elect from the condemned within humankind. At this point Peter lets the demons go, an action that is repeated often in the exorcisms described in other apocryphal acts too (it happens regularly, for instance, in the Acts of Thomas, where the rationale is the same ascribed to the mouth of the "chief-demon" in the Petrine fragment). The outcome of the scene is consistent with the picture of exorcism that emerges in the early materials concerning Jesus. Despite a later theologizing attempt to present these events as signs of Jesus's apocalyptic defeat of evil, the typical result of Jesus's exorcisms is not the destruction of the demons but more simply their removal and displacement with the implicit assumption that they might return. Indeed, a cross-cultural observation of spirit possession shows quite clearly that such phenomena are almost always recurrent, a conclusion that is in turn supported explicitly by the famous Q saying (11:24–26) about the unclean spirit returning to his host with seven others worse than himself.[52] However, the Petrine fragment as well as the other episode taken from the Acts of John show how "spirits" can perform positive work, in agreement with their eminently fluid nature, if they are treated the right way.[53]

Such positive work can actually be done when "spirits" are treated in ways appropriate to their distinctive natures. This is the reason behind the taxo-

nomic structure of ancient demonologies noted years ago by Jonathan Z. Smith, as already mentioned. Cross-cultural observations show that the identification of "spirits" in cases of possession is a matter of primary importance and that such a task calls for the application of significant communal resources of knowledge about domains as different as mythology, cosmology, and history.[54] Moreover, the "host" must undergo a complex and sophisticated process of reconstruction of his or her own subjectivity in order to become an efficient and effective conduit for the healing and divinatory powers of the "spirit." In practical terms, given the relative state of unconsciousness in which most possession experiences are expected to take place, this second aspect also requires a relevant involvement of the social group to which the host belongs. This is the reason why Manduhai Buyandelgeryin can describe the formation of a shaman among the Buryats of Mongolia as a negotiation around symbolic capital between the individual and the community.[55]

Such ethnographic considerations might lead us to reconsider the context that exegetes usually presuppose for the Beelzebul pericope. While there is little doubt that the current setting of the episode—in particular in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew—is polemical, there are reasons (which will be examined more in detail below) to suspect that this was not the more traditional context of the confrontation. Given that the pericope assumes that Jesus performs his exorcisms and healings by virtue of his own possession, one might hypothesize that the Beelzebul episode represents a stage in the negotiations through which the Nazarene came to form his subjectivity as a "spirit host" in dialogue with his social group.

A DIVIDED KINGDOM

An important confirmation of such a hypothesis comes from the analysis of the first answer given by Jesus to his "accusers" both in Mark and in the Q version of the episode:

Mk 3:23 Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶς Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν; 24 Καὶ ἐὰν βασιλεία ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ, οὐ δύναται σταθῆναι ἡ βασιλεία ἐκείνη; 25 Καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὴν μερισθῇ, οὐ δυνήσεται ἡ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι; 26 Καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀνέστη εφ᾽ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐμερίσθη, οὐ δύναται στῆναι ἀλλὰ τέλος ἔχει.

And he summoned them and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. 25 And if a household is divided against itself, that household will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has rebelled against himself and he is divided, he is not able to stand, but is at an end."

Q 11:17 Εἰδὼς δὲ τὰ διανοήματα αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα [καθ᾽] ἑαυτῆ[ς] ἐρημοῦται καὶ πᾶσα οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ᾽ ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται. 18 Καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη, πῶς σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ;

But, knowing their thoughts, he said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is left barren, and every household divided against itself will not be standing. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"

Apart from the two introductory remarks (which are clearly due to the redactional interventions of the authors of Mark and Q, respectively)[56] the first answer ascribed to Jesus in both documents is largely the same. In the case at hand, the "parable" is a true comparison, in which observable and "natural" phenomena (pertaining to socio-political organizations, such as kingdoms and households) are put in parallel with phenomena that take place in the "realm of the spirits."[57] Despite its apparent straightforwardness, however, the rhetorical argument Jesus develops here has created significant problems for exegetes. There are basically two options for understanding the final rhetorical question posed by Jesus in the overall context of the entire pericope.[58] On the one hand, Jesus is presenting an actual scenario in which the realm of Satan is in turmoil and even threatens to come to its *telos.* If one adopts this interpretation, then Jesus is admitting that he is performing his exorcisms and healings *by virtue of* the power of Beelzebul and against that of Satan. On the other hand, one might take Jesus's final question as a *reductio ad absurdum,* a rhetorical ploy that depicts an impossible outcome in order to show that the implicit premises of the accusation are logically untenable. In this case, Jesus would prove that Beelzebul does not possess him by showing that it is absurd to assume that Satan's rule might be divided, since it does not really seem to be coming to an end.

There is little doubt that both options present problems, both in the theological realm and in the rhetorical construction of the pericope. One of the

most accurate readings of this section (which is usually side-stepped by commentators)[59] comes from Joel Marcus, who shows compellingly that the only two viable positions are those summarized above. Marcus chooses to interpret the last question of Jesus as a *reductio ad absurdum.* While Marcus's choice is argued in a very convincing way overall, there are two major points for which he does not seem to provide a completely satisfactory explanation. The first issue concerns the interpretation of the verses immediately following the rhetorical question. Both in Mark (3:27, the burglary of a strong man's house) and in Q (11:19–20, Jesus's saying on the exorcisms performed with the "finger of God"), it appears that Jesus's exorcisms do indeed signal at the very least the beginning of Satan's downfall and—more implicitly—of the victory of God's sovereignty. We will come back to this issue later, but it is worth emphasizing at the start that, were one to adopt Marcus's *reductio ad absurdum* option, one ought to provide a convincing explanation for this logical contradiction in the space of a few verses.

The second problem with the reading of the "divided kingdom" saying as a *reductio ad absurdum* is that this interpretation is forced to assume that the two names "Beelzebul" and "Satan" refer to the same entity. Most scholars seem to take this assumption for granted, but the historical support for it is actually quite flimsy. The name "Beelzebul," in particular, is almost unknown before the time of composition of the Gospels, and this has generated a significant debate concerning its right spelling and its etymology.[60] Indeed, the lone mention of the name in the Hebrew Bible occurs in 2 Kings 1, where King Ahaziah is injured because of a fall out of a window and sends for the help of "Beel-zebub, the god of Ekron." This action is perceived as an affront to the God of Israel and leads to the opposition of the prophet Elijah and ultimately to the death of the king. It is almost universally accepted that the deity mentioned in 2 Kings is the same that appears in the Gospel accounts as "Beelzebul." The variation in spelling is in all likelihood due to the fact that the Hebrew text plays with the original honorific name by transforming it into "Lord of the flies."[61] The documents discovered at Ras Shamra have proved that the Gospels preserve the correct spelling of the name as "Beelzebul." There, the radical *zbl* means "raised" or "exalted," so that a more adequate translation of the title might be "high Lord." Nevertheless, as far as the present analysis is concerned, it is noteworthy that the Jesus traditions have preserved this name despite the lack of other attestations from the same historical moment.[62] The data seems to indicate the survival of a "popular" tradition that is otherwise absent from the literary record.[63]

Significantly different is the situation of "Satan," a name that is equally sparsely attested in the Hebrew Bible but that seems to have become more relevant in the Second Temple period.[64] However, even though one encounters an increased number of occurrences of "satan" in this period, it does not yet seem to have become a personal name, as it was not the case in the Hebrew Bible (for example, in Job's famous opening scene in heaven). For instance, in the handful of occurrences among the Qumran documents "satan" ought clearly to be understood "not as a proper name, but rather as the description of a figure who could also be a human adversary."[65] A possible exception might be 11Q15, an apotropaic prayer that will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. However, here "satan" is associated with "a spirit of uncleanness," an association that underscores once more the generic nature of the designation.[66] The same conclusions may apply to Jubilees, a text in which "satan" often generically indicates one of the evils that humans might face when they stray from God's commandments.[67] It is important to note that while Jubilees does indeed know of a malevolent "chief adversary" of God, the latter figure is regularly called "Mastema." However, it seems that the figure of the "chief adversary of God" begins to overlap with *the* "Satan," at least in one passage that describes the harmful activities of the demons and that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.[68] Eventually, it is in texts that come from the early Jesus groups that one can see a more consistent transformation of "Satan" into the personal name of the devil. The Gospel of Mark occupies a sort of intermediate position along such a trajectory, since it includes passages in which the name is still treated in a generic way,[69] passages in which the term almost seems to indicate a specific being who performs a generic "adversarial" function,[70] and passages (such as the present one) in which "Satan" is the ruler of a kingdom directly opposed to God's.

These brief remarks should have clarified that "Beelzebul" and "Satan" are two names whose overlap is far from a given and—most important of all—is not supported by any Jewish or Christian evidence from the Second Temple period. As far as the "Beelzebul controversy" is concerned, many exegetes assume the identification, but the most accurate ones are also aware of the difficulties inherent in such an interpretive move.[71] Indeed, such difficulties become even more significant when one attends to the specific features that distinguish the figure of Beelzebul from that of Satan. As illustrated above, the single story involving Beelzebul that might conceivably have occurred to a first-century CE Jew is that of 2 Kings 1. In that account two traits are clearly associated with the figure of the non-Jewish deity-turned-demon.

First, Beelzebul is connected with the healing of bodily ailments, an element that can certainly fit his reappearance in Mark and Q with their fundamental lack of distinction between illness and spirit possession. Second, Beelzebul is quite evidently a foreign entity, not only because it is a nonhuman demon but even more meaningfully because the story of the ill-conceived consultation of King Ahaziah revolves around the assertion that Beelzebul cannot be a good healer for an Israelite and that asking for his help is tantamount to a breach of the loyalty owed by Israel to God. Both these traits are missing from the portraits of "Satan" that one finds in the Jewish sources of the Second Temple period. There is no healing power—not even a fraudulent or "pagan" one—associated with Satan. But note that the foreign label that comes attached to Beelzebul is missing from Satan. There is no doubt that the latter is represented as *the* adversary of God and of God's sovereignty, but—as Elaine Pagels observed roughly twenty years ago—the construction of an all-encompassing enemy that starts in Second Temple Jewish texts and is later developed within the Christ movement is that of an internal or—even better—of an "intimate" opponent.[72] Such a process of demonic "internalization" has been analyzed in a most insightful way across early rabbinic and early Christian texts by Ishay Rosen-Zvi.[73] In sum, the "adversarial" nature of "Satan" is inscribed in the very name of the "spirit" and in its appearances in the Jewish traditions in a way that cannot fit "Beelzebul," if the identification between the two figures is not assumed but proved on the benchmark provided by the ancient evidence.

It is appropriate to add to these remarks the observation that the text of the controversy emphasizes the difference between Beelzebul and Satan at the level of their respective positions within the hierarchical structure of the "spirit" world. Indeed, while Satan is implicitly designated as a "king" (βασιλεύς) who can even foolishly fancy himself a rival of God's cosmic rule, Beelzebul is simply indicated as a "chief" (ἄρχων). Moreover, it is worth noting that Beelzebul is appointed as "commander" of the δαιμόνια, which are particularly fickle and ambiguous "soldiers." It is difficult to imagine that such hierarchical distinctions might have been lost on the authors and early readers of texts such as Mark and Q.[74] Clearly, these are additional indications that must be taken seriously as signifiers of a distinction between the two beings and of the nature of their relationship. Thus, the few exegetes who conclude that our verses do not superimpose Beelzebul and Satan seem to be on the right track[75]—a conclusion that is all the more likely when one takes into consideration the additional benefits of avoiding the complex *reductio ad*

absurdum advocated by Joel Marcus and of preserving a more coherent flow for the rhetorical argument developed in the remnant of the pericope.[76]

What are the consequences of such a relationship between Jesus and Beelzebul for our understanding of how the Christ movement imagined "spirit possession"? Once more, the situation is significantly clarified when the data derived from ancient texts are compared with those of contemporary ethnographic studies of these phenomena. For one thing, that a healer and exorcist is himself or herself possessed is a common occurrence. Moreover, in several possession cults the "spirits" are envisaged as beings with foreign personalities, often at odds with the cultural expectations and personal proclivities of their hosts.[77] This is also the case for the "spirits" that are exorcized by Jesus, both in Mark and in Q. Their most common designation is the generic "impure spirits," which underscores their foreignness and opposition to the cultural identity of the audiences to whom these narratives are addressed.[78] Foreignness cannot be surprising for beings that are pictured as inhabiting the liminal areas of culturally constructed space both in a very concrete sense ("spirits" tend to appear in deserted areas, away from cities and other places identified as "civilized") and in ways that have more to do with cosmology and ontology (as witnessed by the uncertain status of demons forever suspended between the material and the immaterial). Nevertheless, the foreignness of these "spirits" is always relative since it is through their "possession" that humans can literally embody their own culture's mythology and history.

Such foreignness has an obvious bearing on the complex process that leads mediums and their "spirits" to become acquainted in ways that can prove beneficial for the community and for the individual host. Diana Espírito Santo has described with great theoretical sophistication the means through which Cuban *espiritismo* practitioners educate their "attention" to receive, discern, and interpret the information conveyed by their *muertos* (protective spirits of the dead).[79] Instead of being a process through which notions are *learned* (as in the intellectual western understanding of "education"), such "attention" is cultivated in a different way, since it must encompass more than mere cognitive knowledge to include affects and bodily practices. Western educational paradigms are predicated on the assumption of an ontological and unavoidable distinction between body and mind, with the latter being impermeable to foreign "possession." However, the very phenomenon of spirit possession as it has been described so far disrupts dichotomies such as body/mind and trance/awareness. From this perspective, then, educating one's attention to

the presence of the spirits requires, in Espírito Santo's words, the "enskillment of one's self."[80] The anthropologist describes a couple of instances in which such "enskillment" developed, as mediums started off with a conflicted relationship with their *muertos* and over time established a mutually beneficial balance. "Spirits" are at first usually unruly and "wild," so much so that their presence is almost always made evident not only through bodily illnesses but also through psychological and existential distress for the potential medium.[81] Espírito Santo points to the subtle but no less fundamental distinction between "spirits" that "come with" their hosts (and are thus disruptive for their personal and social lives) and "spirits" that are "theirs." The latter outcome is not the result of all experiences of spirit possession, but in order to be achieved it calls for "a gradual and conscious interpenetration between such entities and the sentient, moving bodies" of the mediums. Such education of "attention" can be described as "a means of ascertaining the possibilities and limitations of one's condition, and of subverting them through the careful production of oneself via knowledge of these entities."

Adeline Masquelier describes a similar process of construction of the self on the part of a "host," based on her ethnographic work involving the *bori* cults of Niger.[82] Masquelier analyzes the story of Zeinabou, a young woman who is subjected by the violent "spirit" Rankasso to a traumatic and shameful public "confession" of past, and up to that moment secret, transgressions in her familiar and sexual life. The description of how Zeinabou comes to cope in the space of years with the very public consequences of such an event is a powerful exemplification of the trajectory followed by mediums when they start off as veritable "hostages" of their "spirits" and then become truly their "hosts." In Masquelier's words, possession "is about the ongoing negotiation of identity and autonomy between spirit and host, a negotiation that may entail profit as well as pain for the human party as both beings struggle to coexist within a single corporeal frame." The process through which mediums come to embrace the radical Otherness of the "spirits" is often painful beyond the purely physical illnesses experienced at the onset of possession. The case of Zeinabou aptly illustrates the social and moral implications of dealing with an unruly "spirit," but it also shows how such a situation provides mediums with a relatively safe opportunity to express feelings of guilt and to come to terms with new expectations. Following Lambek, Masquelier thus can describe possession as "a system of communication that mystifies agency, authority, and accountability at the same time that it provides a means to relocate one's

selfhood within a concrete and enduring web of mythical, moral, and material relations."

In this light, one may read the "accusation" of performing exorcisms with the help of Beelzebul and Jesus's slightly clumsy riposte (based on the analogy between human kingdoms and Satan's rule) as an instance of the same process of education of "attention." In such a reading, Jesus appears to have been in the same situation of Zeinabou. For the medium, "the confession 'she' made while she was in the throes of possession provided a critical space of reflexivity and retrospective elaboration at the same time that it authorized further strategies for the redefinition of her selfhood and subjectivity."[83] As far as Jesus is concerned, the association with the foreign and dangerous power of Beelzebul provides a critical opportunity to reconstruct and reproduce his own subjectivity as an exorcist and a principal fighter in the battle against Satan.

Joel Marcus has attempted to resolve the inconsistency between the *reductio ad absurdum* of the verses on Satan's divided kingdom and the affirmation of the actual binding of the "strong one" by way of a diachronic reading. The verses on the divided rule would thus represent an early stage of Jesus's self-understanding as an exorcist, in which he defended himself from the charge of possession with clever rhetorical tricks and in which he had not yet conceptualized his activities as an eschatological endpoint. The verses on the binding of the strong man instead mark the arrival on the scene of a more "mature" Jesus, for whom exorcisms now do signify the final defeat of Satan and the realization of God's cosmic rule.[84] However, Marcus's admittedly fascinating interpretation fails to take into due consideration the very real distinction between Beelzebul and Satan that we noted above. Even more problematic and damaging than this oversight is Marcus's lack of attention to the concrete dynamic of spirit possession with respect to the production of the medium's subjectivity. Indeed, Marcus's reading—like almost all the others advanced in contemporary critical examinations of the pericope—is trapped within modern Western assumptions about the absolute importance of beliefs (in this case, systematic conceptions of eschatological scenarios), with the attendant conclusion that possession is merely the pretext for a doctrinal debate. On the contrary, the reading proposed here claims that the key element in this episode is a discussion on the nature of spirit possession and on the attendant means through which the subjectivity of an exorcist is produced. Jesus is represented as confronted with the need to embrace the radical Otherness of Beelzebul as the latter inhabits his own body. The ensuing painful, but also

creative, negotiation enables Jesus to become an effective healer and a fearsome adversary of Satan.[85]

<center>*BINDING THE "STRONG ONE"*</center>

The practice of "spirit" possession is full of ambiguities, as one would expect given its fundamental nature of embodiment of Otherness. In a particularly insightful methodological contribution on the work of "shamans," Graham Harvey has proposed to move the scholarly study of "possession" away from its narrow focus on establishing the exact state of consciousness of individuals undergoing trance. The latter approach (in the classic definition provided in Eliade's seminal work and in that of his followers) is too radically conditioned by modern Western paradigms of interiorization and individual autonomy, Harvey insists. By instead paying attention to the ways in which these phenomena are conceptualized in other cultural contexts, one may develop an alternative set of paradigms focused on the ability of shamans and other mediums to "communicate" with both human and nonhuman persons.[86]

Harvey is very clear that such methodological move should not imply a romanticization of non-Western "spirit" possession either. As we have seen above with respect to Masquelier's description of Zeinabou's long and tormented negotiation with her "spirits," the "communication" envisaged here is far from a mere information exchange. Indeed, it also entails a continuous struggle for control between at least two agencies, while the "communication" with nonhuman persons can result in the eating of them or in the forming of aggressive alliances, as noted by Harvey. We have seen that these elements are all in play in the descriptions of possession encountered in Mark and Q. As noted above, with the help of Lambek's sophisticated conceptualization of "possession" this relationship can be understood as the total control of the "spirit" on its "host," but things might well be turned in the opposite direction. Thus, in the case of Jesus's encounter with the radical Otherness of Beelzebul, the results could well be catastrophic. That happens in the other cases of demonic possession narrated elsewhere in Mark. In these "negative" cases Jesus provides healing thanks to his exorcistic power. But the "communication" can also become a negotiation that provides benefits for both parties involved and attendant damages for the third party (Satan) against which the two are going to act as allies.

Jesus himself illustrates the positive result of such a negotiation in the verses analyzed above by using the political-theological analogy of a divided human kingdom (or household[87]) compared to the rule of Satan. Jesus's alliance with (or control of) Beelzebul, conceived as a "chieftain" within Satan's kingdom, brings about the latter's demise. It is a given that control cannot be effectively maintained in the presence of divisions of authority.[88] The frailty of demonic power is reiterated in the following sub-section within the Beelzebul pericope, by way of the use of the well-known image of a robbery perpetrated against a "strong one":

> Mk 3:27 Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναται οὐδεὶς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ εἰσελθὼν τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ διαρπάσαι, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δήσῃ, καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει.

> But no one is able to enter a strong one's house and steal his vessels, unless he first binds the strong one; then he will thoroughly plunder his house.

This is an instance in which the wording of the Q parallel to Mk 3:27 cannot be established with any degree of reliability. Indeed, the Matthean version (Matt 12:29) follows Mark very closely (so closely that in all likelihood it depends on it). In turn, the Lukan saying (Lk 11:21–22) shows almost no lexical analogies with the other two and actually appears to be largely indebted to the more sophisticated linguistic preferences of the author of the third Gospel.[89] However, while the Q wording of the "strong man" saying cannot be reconstructed with any degree of certainty, it is safe to conclude that Q also had a saying very similar in content to Mk 3:27 at this point. Such a conclusion is supported by the observation that both Matthew and Luke have a series of materials that are arranged exactly in the same way despite being quite divergent from a strictly linguistic point of view. Thus, as we have seen above, both Matthew and Luke include the Beelzebul accusation, which is immediately followed by Jesus's response concerning divided kingdoms and households (in Matt 12:24 // Lk 11:15 and Matt 12:25–26 // Lk 11:17–18, respectively). In both Gospels these sayings segue directly into the important saying on the "spirit/ finger of God" (Matt 12:27–28 // Lk 11:19–20) that will be examined in the next section. After this saying, both Matthew and Luke have the saying on "binding the strong man" (Matt 12:29 // Lk 11:21–22), which thus falls into the same relative position with respect to other materials within this cluster of sayings. On these grounds, it is easy to see how the "strong one" probably

closed the entire argument in its "original" articulation that was later rewritten in slightly different forms in Mark and Q. The chief evidence for the difference between these two early rewritings is the Q insertion of the sayings on the "spirit/finger of God," which changes significantly the thrust of the overall argument in ways that will be discussed in the next section.[90]

The saying on "binding the strong one" sits quite well in the context of a discussion on spirit possession and exorcism. First of all, all commentators agree on the fact that the "strong one" ought to be identified with Satan, who is mentioned in the preceding verse.[91] The notion that Satan is "bound" and thus defeated flows naturally from the sayings on the divided kingdom and household, once the latter are taken not as a *reductio ad absurdum* (as suggested by Marcus) but as an indication of the means (internal dissension and betrayal in his dominion) through which Satan is weakened.[92]

The means and goals of the action against the "strong one" are also described in ways that unmistakably evoke the world of the "spirits" and their control. In particular, as most exegetes recognize, that Satan is "bound" is reminiscent of a host of Jewish mythical traditions that have to do with demonology and the etiology of evil. In the following chapter we will see in greater detail that the preferred designation (shared by Mark and Q) of the demons as "unclean spirits" signals the connection between the demonology of these texts and the traditions concerning the primordial fall of the angels. The earliest written witness to this myth is probably the so-called Book of the Watchers that opens the collection designated as 1 Enoch. There, God instructs the angel Raphael to "bind" Asael, the leader of the watchers, and to cast him into the darkness right before the Flood and the healing of the earth that had been desolated by the fallen angels.[93] Besides such mythical references, the Greek verb δέω cannot fail to evoke the quasi-technical terminology employed to designate the "magical" operations and the spells (καταδεσμοί) through which "spirits" are controlled in order to assist in damaging opponents or in achieving other beneficial results.[94]

Another (but not as often recognized) element of the saying that ought to evoke the idea of spirit possession is the designation of the goods stolen from the "strong one" as σκεύη (literally "vessels"). In and of itself, this lexical choice is less puzzling than it is sometimes made out to be: σκεύη can and is used to designate—generically and with an extension of its basic meaning—the implements that constitute the property of a given household and that could conceivably be taken away by a robber. Nevertheless, the term is also employed to indicate the "human body," conceived as a "vessel" that contains

the true human "essence" that can then be indicated as "soul" or other similar labels.[95] Yet in the context of the Beelzebul pericope and its consistent focus on the themes of spirit possession and of the power relationships entailed within it, σκεύη understood as "bodily vessels" can take on an additional nuance of meaning. There are indeed several early Christian texts in which the Greek term is used to designate the human body as a "container" for benign or malevolent "spirits" (a particularly conspicuous case is provided by the *Shepherd* of Hermas). The latter nuance fits the context and the content of the saying on "binding the strong one" quite well. Thanks to Jesus's newly found exorcistic power, Satan can be "bound," and its "vessels"—the human beings whom it has possessed—can be taken away from him.

Obviously, in light of what has been said at the beginning of this chapter with reference to the ambiguity of the label "spirit possession" and its dangerous devaluation of human agency, designating these possessed human beings as "vessels" cannot be an innocent move. Similar to what one can see through the theoretical reflections of Johnson and Harvey, the saying on "the strong one" underscores the fact that "spirit possession"—even when the phenomenon is appropriately understood as a form of "communication," as Graham Harvey does—entails complex and multifaceted power relationships. On the one hand, such ambiguity is all the more salient here because the phenomenon of possession touches on the very bodily existence of human beings and compromises the very unity of their subjective consciousness. Yet on the other hand, possession also has an inherently public dimension that raises a host of important issues concerning the relationship between this phenomenon and its socio-political conditions.

In the case of the saying on "binding the strong one," as noted above with reference to the occurrence of σκεύη, such interpretive issues are rendered more acute by the very nature of the imagery chosen for possession and for the "fight" entailed in it. Thus, Annette Merz insightfully observes that calling the human beings delivered from Satan's control "vessels" implies their representation as "slaves" and ultimately their objectification or even commodification even as it hints at their deliverance from an alien power.[96] Moreover, that this victory over the strength of malevolent "spirits" is couched in language and imagery that evoke violence and the morally objectionable activity of robbery often—and understandably—gives exegetes pause. Nevertheless, one must admit that the recourse to violent and morally ambiguous images is far from unusual, both for the apocalyptic literature of the Second

Temple period and for the parables ascribed to Jesus. The latter materials, in particular, often contain narrative and ideological elements that not only might be construed as arresting for modern readers but also greatly contribute to the effective and striking quality of these stories.[97]

Such interpretive issues are only in part generated by the differences in moral outlook that separate ancient writers from modern exegetes. An additional complication is intimately tied to the nature of spirit possession and to the ways in which the phenomenon is culturally described and practiced. The New Testament scholar who has been able to capture such intricate intersections better than others is Halvor Moxnes. Building on Jonathan Z. Smith's understanding of the "demonic" as primarily a locative category, Moxnes recognizes how spirit possession and exorcism are closely connected to confrontations between competing ideological representations of space.[98] In the case of the Beelzebul pericope, Moxnes notes that the choice to express the subversion of Satan's rule by means of the spatial images of kingdom and household signals that Jesus connects spirit possession with the two main forms of spatial practice that characterized the life of Galilean villagers in the first century CE. Thus, Jesus's exorcisms and the defeat of the "strong one" indicate the replacement of traditional practices (appropriation and use of space for the household and domination and control of space for the kingdom) with an altogether different practice (that of the kingdom of God).

Moxnes' acknowledgment of the connection between spirit possession and political practices of space is insightful and enriching from an exegetical point of view. But it is worth pondering whether its application might not at times run the risk of losing sight of the phenomenon of possession in its culturally specific and productive role. This point will be treated in more detail in the following chapter, but for now suffice it to say that a hermeneutical distortion does indeed happen in the exegesis of the Beelzebul pericope too. For instance, the already-mentioned treatment of the "strong one" saying by Merz lists an almost all-encompassing series of evils from which exorcism narratives would represent a *metaphorical* liberation. Thus, the story of binding the "strong one" signifies Jesus's power to free humans from physical illnesses, socio-political inequalities, and even existential distress. All the while, however, exorcism itself remains a mere mechanism that would take care of the transfer of aggressive impulses—generated by oppressive socio-cultural conditions—onto a substitutive object.[99] Even Moxnes can sometimes slip into a similar type of reasoning (clearly fueled by Ioan Lewis's conceptualization of

"peripheral" possession), for instance when describing possession "as one of the coping mechanisms against pressures, where there are no good ways out or no possible solutions."[100]

In fact, it is better to conceptualize possession as a culturally productive experience in which the contribution of individual agency is not reduced to a mere reaction to external conditions of oppression or distress. From this perspective, the adoption of images and idioms that have to do with political and spatial practices is a means to describe the complex and not always harmless negotiations that characterize the relationship between mediums and "spirits." Indeed, several ethnographic studies have highlighted how the choice of such idioms signals the deep ties between the experiences of individual bodies and minds and their broader socio-political contexts.[101]

With respect to the utilization of kingdom imagery in the Beelzebul pericope, perhaps the aptest comparison would be with the possession and exorcistic rituals conducted around the tomb of the Moroccan *marabout* Ben Yeffou and described by Zakaria Rhani in a series of recent publications.[102] In the village of Ben Yeffou, a shrine connected with the homonymous legendary saint is the traditional locale for healings performed as exorcisms of malevolent *jinns*. The exorcisms are possible thanks to a specific power (*beraka*) that is linked to the sanctity of Ben Yeffou. The power is handed down (as *charaf*) to the male descendants of the *marabout,* who thus control the sanctuary as "sheriffs" (*chorfa*). Interestingly enough, Rhani reports that right in front of this shrine there exists a competing healing place in which the exorcisms are performed by a woman (simply designated as B in the ethnography).[103] She claims to possess Ben Yeffou's *beraka* in a measure even superior to the official *chorfa.* The contrast and the competition are played out in a spatial perspective too, since B occupies the "house" (*zaouïa*) in which Ben Yeffou allegedly lived and left significant traces of his *beraka.* Even more important for our purposes is the way in which B describes how she received her exorcistic power in contrast to the traditional and almost bureaucratic transmission in the lineage of the *chorfa.* Following a pattern that is common in such cases, B has been possessed by malevolent "spirits" that have caused her illnesses for fifteen years until they were displaced by other benign "spirits" who now provide her with the ability to heal. It is noteworthy that these "spirits" are called *mlouk* in Arabic, a word that stems from an etymological root that means "to possess" as well as "to be king." Indeed, B relates that on the occasion in which she received her exorcistic power, she dreamt of Ben Yeffou, of the Moroccan king Mohammed VI, and of his princely brother Rachid (designated

as *mlouk*).[104] Despite being a woman and not being of the right lineage, by becoming the "receptacle" of these superhuman "kings"[105] B has acquired a healing power that is reportedly stronger than that of those who are generally assumed to be the sole holders of the right form of *charaf*.

Thus, ethnographic literature confirms that the adoption of political idioms is far from unique to the traditions concerning Jesus's possession and exorcisms. In fact, it seems to be a very common occurrence, both with respect to the construction of mediums' subjectivities and with respect to the broad socio-political implications of the phenomenon of possession.[106] Such observations underscore the varied character of the complex negotiations that take place among mediums, "spirits," and their audiences on a wide spectrum of options stretching from constructive alliance to destructive aggression. In the case of the Beelzebul pericope, the use of political imagery is organic to the sayings' attempt to work through the traumatic datum of Jesus's possession to reach a positive balance by way of his newfound ability to defeat the harmful power of Satan. From this perspective, the comparison with a case such as that of Ben Yeffou's exorcisms also highlights the space for agency that is opened up in possession, precisely in light of the use of a socio-politically charged idiom.

WITH THE FINGER OF GOD

The preceding sections have shown that the Beelzebul pericope preserves unusually transparent accounts of the fluidity of "spirit possession" and of the complex path through which the phenomenon can be negotiated to produce "benefits" for the possessed subject and for the group. The Q version of the Beelzebul pericope contains two additional verses (Q 11:19–20) that are located between the sayings on the divided kingdom and household and the saying on binding the "strong one." The Q wording of verses 19–20 can be reconstructed without too many problems, since the Matthean (Matt 12:27–28) and the Lukan (11:19–20) versions are almost identical:

19 Καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβοὺλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; Διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν. 20 Εἰ δὲ ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

19 And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, your sons, by whom do they cast them out? This is why they will be your judges. 20 But if it is by

the finger of God that I cast out demons, then there has come upon you God's reign.

The single major difference between the two versions is that—at the beginning of verse 20—Matthew has Jesus performing his exorcisms "by the spirit of God" (ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ), while Luke attributes the action to "the finger of God." While it would be appealing, in the context of the present discussion, to prefer the Matthean version, there are strong internal reasons that suggest the more "original" version to be the Lukan "finger of God," as it is done in the main reconstructions of the Q text.[107] First, as we will see, "finger of God" is a somewhat obscure phrase, a state of affairs that renders very likely a scenario in which Matthew substituted it with the more common "spirit of God." Second, Luke is clearly very fond of the "spirit of God," which is often inserted redactionally in other pericopes in the third Gospel and which plays a significant theological role in Acts too. For these reasons, it seems difficult to imagine that Luke could have eliminated it if he had found it in Q. Finally, it is sometimes noted that verse 19 somehow diminishes the uniquely eschatological relevance of Jesus's exorcisms (by implicitly equating them with those of the "sons" of his interlocutors). If that is indeed the case, stating that Jesus performs his healings "by the spirit of God" goes a long way toward reestablishing the qualitative uniqueness of his actions. The latter move may be construed as a convenient way to "correct" a saying that could prove itself embarrassing for later Christ groups intent on presenting the figure of Jesus as unparalleled and unique.

Without entering a highly speculative discussion on the redactional processes that led to the formation of the cluster Q 11:19–20, a few observations can be helpful to focus our understanding of the entire pericope. Traditionally, exegesis has tended to treat verse 20 as a self-contained unit, claiming that it could be traced back to the historical Jesus. Thus, it would convey precious information about Jesus's belief that the eschatological manifestation of the kingdom of God was closely associated with his exorcistic activity.[108] The scholarly tide has actually turned on this topic, beginning with a 1996 article by Heikki Räisänen. Räisänen convincingly demonstrated that Q 11:20 ought to be treated as inseparable from its immediate literary context in the Sayings Gospel.[109] The classic position is still occasionally defended,[110] but a majority of scholars does not consider verse 20 to be a saying that unequivocally came from the mouth of the historical Jesus. In particular, it has become clear that the earlier attempts to sever verse 20 from verse 19 were based on a

theologically suspicious basis. Specifically, this is the now-untenable assumption that Jesus's main intent was to distance himself and his activities from Judaism.[111]

Q 11:19—with its appeal to the exorcist practice of the "sons" of Jesus's "accusers"—may fit quite well the context of the other materials discussed so far in this chapter. Confronted with the problematic nature of his possession by/of Beelzebul, Jesus—as we have seen above—finds a successful negotiation by affirming the positive effects that can come from his "hosting" this specific "spirit." To this perspective, verse 19 adds a consistent argument: according to the usual practice in exorcisms, is it not true that other exorcists too must "host" foreign "spirits" in order to be able to perform their beneficial work? In agreement with Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre's very insightful observations on the Beelzebul pericope, one ought to read Q 11:19 not as grounded in the desire to advance Jesus's unique authority or to worsen the division among competing Jewish groups but as an attempt to establish solidarity and collaboration.

That being said, it seems clear that verses 19–20 do indeed introduce a slightly different nuance with respect to the materials common to Mark and Q. Several pieces of evidence indicate that this is likely due to a redactional intervention when the Beelzebul materials were included in the Sayings Gospel. First, the theme of "judgment" of opponents in polemical contexts is widespread in Q.[112] Second, the treatment of the divine *basileia* in this verse is different from that of God's kingdom as a locative category in the remnant of the Beelzebul pericope, as noted by Halvor Moxnes. For instance, the detail that the *basileia* "has come upon" or "has reached out" (ἔφθασεν) does not fit at all with the notion of "kingdom" as a controlled space. Instead, as I have shown elsewhere, such linguistic peculiarities in all likelihood depend on the "village scribes" who composed Q and go back to Hellenistic and Roman royal ideology. Q 11:20 conceptualizes divine sovereignty as providing for the welfare of subjects out of a sense of *philanthropia* characterizing kingly rule.[113] Finally, while one should avoid the anti-Jewish exegetical implications noted by Johnson-DeBaufre, one ought to conclude that verses 19–20 put the figure and the activity of Jesus at the center of attention. And this is done much more effectively than in the remnant of the Beelzebul pericope. Whether one takes the mention of the "finger of God" as a reminiscence of the Jewish Scriptures[114] or as a reference to "magical" procedures in the performance of exorcisms,[115] Jesus plays a key role in mediating divine exorcistic power for the benefit of humankind.

It is easier to appreciate the redactional tendencies of Q in the Beelzebul unit when the case of verses 19–20 is compared with that of another sub-unit that has received far less scholarly attention. Q 11:24–26 preserves a very odd story about the troubles of an exorcised demon:

> 24 When the impure spirit has left the person, it wanders through wa-terless regions looking for a resting place, and finds none. Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came. 25 And on arrival it finds it swept and tidied up. 26 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and, moving in, they settle there. And the last circumstances of that person become worse than the first.

The Q text is easily reconstructed since Matthew and Luke use almost the identical wording. A more complex proposition is to establish the position of the saying within Q, since Matthew has it at 12:43–45. However, almost all the reconstructions of Q agree in preferring the Lukan placement, since the saying—despite its odd content—seems a good fit for the Beelzebul unit.[116] Moreover, it bears noting that the strikingly passive treatment of humans as "dwellings" matches their treatment as "vessels," which—as noted before with respect to the saying about "binding the strong one"—is equally focused on reducing the extent of their agency.[117]

Looking at the scholarly treatments of this saying in comparison with Q 11:19–20 is an instructive exercise. One has seen already that the exami-nations of verses 19 and 20 (and in particular the attempts to demonstrate that verse 20 belongs to the *ipsissima verba Jesu*) have been legion. On the contrary, verses 24–26 are rarely given more than a single page of attention in commentaries. And even that happens mostly because exegetes are bound by the rules of their genre to write at least something on each portion of the Gospel. There is little doubt that this state of affairs is produced in part by the very odd nature of verses 24–26, but there is something else at play here. Several analyses of verses 24–26 do recognize that they probably belonged to an otherwise lost "manual of exorcism" or that they transmit a fragment of popular "exorcistic wisdom."[118] But many critical examinations of the saying are invested in showing that it is in fact a parable or that its intent is mostly paraenetic and not really informative about the actual dynamics of spirit pos-session and exorcism.[119] Moreover, not a few exegetes—starting with Johannes Weiss—like to read in verses 24–26 a mocking or humorous tone on the part of Jesus. Such reading strategies are an almost seamless repetition of the al-legorization deployed already by some of the Church Fathers who had to deal

with these weird verses centuries ago. In general, the recurring feeling is that associating Jesus with such statements or such beliefs is awkward. Thus, it is better to do it by postulating either a mocking or moralizing intention.

That being said, these exegetical struggles are easily understood within a modern western ontological regime, in which spirit possession is difficult to deal with (and thus difficult to ascribe to the historical Jesus as well). On the contrary, if a saying has any claim to be attributed to the historical Jesus, that is certainly the case for Q 11:24–26. Indeed, possession is almost always a form of illness that cannot be healed once and for all but is highly subject to "relapse." This is a conclusion that is supported by a remarkable wealth of ethnographic observations. Appropriately, Stuckenbruck observes with respect to these verses that "being exorcized is not a static condition, but is a mode of being within a fluid life process."[120] As such, verses 24–26 fit quite well the reality of possession as a socio-religious phenomenon and also the presentation of Jesus in the Beelzebul tradition as that of a possessed individual who builds his role as an exorcist through a negotiation with his "spirit." It is debatable how much confidence one might have in the traditional criteria for the quest for the historical Jesus, but certainly verses 24–26 are good candidates for the application of the criterion of embarrassment. It is difficult to imagine that someone added materials that so clearly state the temporary effectiveness of Jesus's exorcisms. Such a stance contradicts quite stridently the understanding of Jesus's acts as signifying the definitive establishment of the divine kingdom.

In this perspective, the redactional development of the Beelzebul pericope can be reconstructed as a two-stage process. In all likelihood, verses 19–20 were not already attached to the core sayings that composed the cluster at the "original" stage.[121] At that stage the group of sayings simply tried to represent the origin of Jesus's possession and the negotiation that led to his becoming the "host" for a "spirit" that gave him the power to perform exorcisms. When verses 19–20 were attached to the pericope, the modification altered radically the tone of the episode in the Sayings Gospel and consequently also in Matthew and Luke. The reliability of such a reconstruction is strengthened by a cursory observation of the elements that, on the one hand, connect these two verses to the Sayings Gospel Q and, on the other hand, distinguish it from the traditions concerning possession and exorcisms that can be reliably traced back to the historical Jesus. First, one should note that the unique role of Jesus in the fight against the devil (which has been mentioned above as a characteristic of vv. 19–20) is emphasized in the Sayings Gospel. Indeed, it can scarcely be due to chance that the entire activity of Jesus as it is described

in Q is prefaced by a lengthy narrative (Q 4:1–13) in which the hero confronts the devil and demonstrates his superiority by defeating him.[122] Moreover, one can note that such a defeat comes about in a way that highlights Jesus's scriptural expertise. This is consistent with the ethos of the village scribes who composed Q and differs from the descriptions of actual exorcisms in which explicit references to the Jewish scriptures play almost no role.[123] Second, the main reason why so many scholars are invested in pushing back verse 20 toward the historical Jesus is that this is one of the very few places in which the exorcistic practice of Jesus is clearly associated with the arrival of the "kingdom" of God. Interestingly, no narrative of an exorcism even mentions the theme of the "kingdom" or the apocalyptic significance that might be attached to Jesus's actions. After the long discussion included in this chapter, it should be clear that possession is too traumatic and ambiguous an experience for it to be associated with such lofty claims.[124] In fact, once one has accepted that verses 19–20 may well be a redactional insertion of Q, several other elements become clearer. For one thing, the saying is remarkably consistent with the above-mentioned tendency of the Sayings Gospel to emphasize the personal role of Jesus in the battle against the devil.[125] A similar redactional modification of the Beelzebul pericope also arguably took place when these materials were included in the Gospel of Mark. There, the addition of the saying on the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Mk 3:28–29 (with a possible parallel in Q 12:10) can indicate that Jesus's exorcistic activity is now understood as the signifier that "the eschatological restoration is in progress."[126]

THE "ACCUSATION" REVISITED

In the preceding sections, one has seen that the "original" Beelzebul pericope contained the elements of an early reflection on how a human host (in this case, Jesus) could negotiate the traumatic experience of possession and turn it towards productive goals. Already at the stage of its inclusion in Q, the episode had been modified by the addition of a few verses that emphasized the apocalyptic and christological significance of Jesus's exorcisms.

When one goes back to look at the entirety of the Beelzebul pericope in its redactional trajectory, it is interesting to note that the cluster of sayings takes on a decidedly polemical overtone. Such a development is already apparent in the Markan redaction of the pericope. As noted at the very beginning of this chapter, Mark obfuscates the original nature of the episode by compounding the initial question about Jesus's being possessed by Beelzebul (in Mk 3:22)

with a comment about his being "out of his mind" (in Mk 3:21). The latter, in particular, serves the purpose of creating a macro-unit that ends in 3:31–35 with another cluster of sayings centered on the redefinition of the family relationship, now with respect not to kinship but to allegiance to Jesus. The criticism of household ties can well be a theme that comes from the historical Jesus, but the way in which it is intertwined here in Mk 3 with the theme of Jesus's possession is clearly a Markan construction. As such, the resulting macro-unit is designed to highlight one of the major motifs running throughout the entire second Gospel—the general failure to understand Jesus's figure and Jesus's mission even on the part of those who should be closer to him, in this case the members of his family and, later on, even his own disciples. Likewise, the insertion of "the scribes who came down from Jerusalem" as those who question Jesus's relationship with Beelzebul (in Mk 3:22) is evidently the result of Markan redactional intervention. Indeed, Mark is prone to cast the opposition to Jesus as stemming from Jerusalem. This is consistent with the overall structure of his narrative in which everything points towards Jesus's final and tragic showdown in the holy city.

Later on, Matthew makes this trajectory even more explicit. The first Gospel attributes the "accusation" of performing exorcisms with the help of Beelzebul to a group of Pharisees (in Mt 12:24), who are the stereotypical malevolent adversaries in Matthew before the Passion narrative.[127] In fact, it is precisely the redactional tendency to highlight the adversarial role of the Pharisees that makes it clear that Luke has in all likelihood preserved the "original" text of Q. At the same time, as we will see, the third Gospel has quite possibly also preserved the profile of the "original" audience of the pericope itself. Lk 11:14 concludes a very brief narrative of the exorcism of a "dumb demon" (δαιμόνιον κωφόν) with the expected reaction of amazement in the crowd (καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι). At this point (in Lk 11:15) "some among them" (τινὲς ἐξ αὐτῶν) suggest that Jesus is performing his exorcisms by virtue of some kind of relationship with Beelzebul.

It is important to emphasize that Q has not preserved only a designation of Jesus's adversaries that is vaguer than the others. The authors of the other Gospels inserted here their enemies of the moment (as Mark did with the "scribes from Jerusalem" and Matthew did with the "Pharisees"). That the Sayings Gospel had only "some" unidentified persons from the crowd questioning Jesus's exorcisms ought to give pause to those exegetes who treat the entire passage as a polemical controversy. Indeed, as we have seen above, in cases of possession the identification of the "spirit" involved was and is a

common occurrence. Plus, it entails the participation of the group that is in varied ways connected to the possessed individual. Thus, a scene like the one presupposed in Q must not necessarily be understood as a polemical confrontation in which rivals try to question Jesus's authority. That is a later development, which is undeniably reflected in the redactions of the pericope (and might well go back in some form to the historical Jesus). But arguably the more "original" version of the story tries to represent the performed negotiation through which Jesus came to recognize his possession by Beelzebul and to reconstruct his new subjectivity as an exorcist on such a foundation. Thus, as Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre urges,[128] it becomes possible to read the Beelzebul pericope as a collaborative effort to make sense of an instance of spirit possession. This is a much apter reading than envisaging a polemical attack with the attendant danger of anachronistically importing the Christianity/Judaism binary into the pericope.

From this perspective, it is crucial to question the exegetical decision to treat the episode as an "accusation" to begin with. This is all the more needed when the latter move is motivated on anthropological grounds with the observation that charging Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebul is equivalent to an accusation of witchcraft. Again, witchcraft charges were certainly present in the cultural context from which the Jesus tradition originated. Moreover, ethnographic data confirm that spirit possession can be associated with witchcraft. Plus, it can well be the case that this was the reasoning behind the redactional modifications that transformed the Beelzebul story into a polemical game of challenge and riposte.

Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that not all cases of spirit possession extant in our documents should be treated as witchcraft.[129] Several ethnographic studies show that possession is—in the vast majority of cases—an ordinary event. It is incumbent upon New Testament scholars to treat it as such, as most anthropologists try to do. Importing the concept of witchcraft into the exegesis of a pericope such as that of Beelzebul seems once again to relegate spirit possession to the realm of the occult and "magic." This is all the more dangerous inasmuch as there appear to be ideological reasons—beyond the redactional construction of the texts—that lead New Testament exegetes to deploy the notion of "witchcraft" at this juncture. For one thing, casting the pericope as an instance of witchcraft accusation fueled by envy provides a good excuse not to talk about an alternative possibility. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that some early Christ followers might have represented Jesus of Nazareth as a possessed exorcist who had acquired this role by coming to

terms with and by culturally negotiating his condition. But there seems to be also a second—and more subtly problematic—reason to insist on seeing the Beelzebul story only as a witchcraft accusation. This suits specifically the work of those interpreters who approach spirit possession by employing the functionalist theoretical paradigms of Ioan Lewis. In this perspective, the entire phenomenon—be it what Lewis calls "central" or be it "peripheral" possession—ultimately is a means to reinscribe hegemonic social structures and values. This is an obviously unacceptable outcome for those who are invested in representing Jesus as a uniquely powerful moral and social reformer. Such uniqueness can be salvaged to a certain extent if the witchcraft accusation is envisaged as a response to Jesus's "objectively" subversive power. In these cases the witchcraft accusation is then attributed (by rather uncritically buying into the polemical rhetoric of Gospel redactors) to the "religious authorities" of the time.

The analysis offered here avoids these interpretive pitfalls and in particular enables one to see the constructive cultural value of spirit possession without necessarily understanding it in a polemical context. On the contrary, the formation of the subjectivity of an exorcist (as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth) can be envisaged as an individual pursuit. But the latter cannot be carried out without an intense and often cooperative dialogue with the broader social context.

CONCLUSIONS

The present chapter has examined the episode of the "Beelzebul accusation" in its redactional development. In particular, this analysis has shown that, by employing a theological political idiom, the pericope describes the diversity and conflict that characterize the spirit world. In such a context a medium can find a way to cope with the traumatic and empowering experience of the Other that is at the root of possession and, in so doing, can stop being a "hostage" but rather a true "host" of the "spirits." The redaction-critical analysis has also shown that the earliest form of this pericope represented the performative and dialogical nature of "emergent" possession in the case of Jesus. Already the very first developments of the oral and textual tradition began to move away from the original focus and to recenter the episode christologically (in the Sayings Gospel Q) and to cast it within a polemical frame (by reshaping the pericope as an instance of witchcraft accusation in the Gospel of Mark).

A Ghost among the Tombs

MK 5:1–20 AS A RITUAL OF EXORCISM

This chapter attends to the Markan description of Jesus's exorcistic activity by focusing on a specific passage (Mk 5:1–20), which stands out among the many similar pericopes in the Gospel both because of its length and its wealth of intriguing details. Among the many strange and uncanny narratives included in the Gospel of Mark, this one is well known both for the fascination that it has held for generations of readers[1] and for the troubles that it has caused professional exegetes. Here I will not attempt to solve all of the exegetical riddles posed by such a fascinating narrative. Instead, in keeping with the performative nature that is recognized as inherent to spirit possession episodes and to exorcisms, particularly in anthropological literature, I will offer a tentative reading of the pericope as the narrative reflection and refraction of a ritual. Ultimately, this approach will result in a hermeneutical improvement on those readings that either straightforwardly allegorize the entire passage or—certainly in a more sophisticated way—focus on the sociopolitical resonances of demonic possession. The analysis will show how exorcisms are a privileged means through which several different cultural "works" are performed, chiefly the embodiment of mythical and historical pasts and the denaturalization and reconstitution of individual and collective identities.

Mark and the other Gospel traditions inherit from the earliest groups of Jesus followers a conceptualization of the Otherness of the "spirits" rooted

in the cultural idioms of Enochic traditions. The identity of these "spirits" as "unclean" is widespread in Second Temple Judaism and indexes the my-theme of the partial survival of the primeval giants, the ill-fated offspring of the union between angels and women. However, Mark combines such a mythological representation with pan-Mediterranean ideas about the return of certain classes of troubled dead, which are well attested in antiquity. The chapter moves from these initial observations to a more detailed analysis of Mk 5:1–20 in which the foreignness of the possessing "spirit" is further com-pounded by the insertion of an anti-Roman political theme. By reading the narrative of Mk 5 as a reflection on and refraction of a ritual of exorcism, the chapter shows that an interpretation informed by the insights of anthro-pological literature can understand the exorcism not simply as an inverted imitation of Roman imperialism but as a means to reshape imaginatively the local structure of ethnic identities in Gerasa, a locale in which Jewish and Gentile identities had to cohabit in flux and in contrast up to the catastrophic events of the first Jewish war.

UNCLEAN SPIRITS

The exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1–20) has a very complex structure compared to other similar pericopes in Mark. However, its funda-mental themes are not significantly different from the other accounts in the Gospel (1:23–28; 7:24–30; 9:14–29). Several scholars have described the basic formal articulation of the exorcism genre. In general, following the seminal analysis of Rudolf Bultmann,[2] one could say that "exorcisms" contain the majority of at least six distinct narrative elements: (1) the meeting with the demon(s), (2) the description of the dangerous character of the condition of possession, (3) the demon's recognition of the exorcist, (4) the exorcism, (5) the demonstrative departure of the demon, and (6) the impression on the spectator(s). All these elements are present in Mk 5:1–20 and thus render this pericope a kind of paradigmatic example. However, many of the other features encountered in Mk 5 do not belong to Bultmann's basic structure, since they occur only in this specific account. As such, these traits have always engaged and attracted the attention of exegetes and commentators. Keeping this in mind, however, the present analysis will begin by reflecting on an ele-ment that is actually common to all the Markan exorcisms. Afterwards, we will move on to examine those traits that make Mk 5:1–20 unique.

In the first act of an exorcism narrative, the exorcist meets the possessed human beings. Indeed, Mk 5:1 opens the story with Jesus disembarking and immediately meeting an ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, who is coming from the tombs. As noted in the previous chapter, the way in which the Gospel describes the condition of possession here and elsewhere, from a linguistic point of view, is curious at best:

> 1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he [Jesus] had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs in an unclean spirit met him. 3 He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; 4 for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones.

The peculiarity of the phrase "being in an unclean spirit" and its implications for the Markan conceptualization of the relationship between "spirit" and "host" have been discussed above in light of the current results of anthropological research. However, the phrase is notable also because it points toward the Jewish roots of the tradition to which the author of the Gospel is gesturing. The designation ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα ("unclean" or "impure spirit") is often encountered in Mark when the Gospel deals with exorcisms. It is worth stressing that the Jewish element here ought not to be identified in the fact that the spirit is presented as "impure" or as a source or cause of "impurity." There is indeed an often-unacknowledged bias in some exegetical treatments of impurity in the New Testament. According to such an assumption Jews would be specifically or eminently concerned with purity, and this would differentiate them from the rest of the ancient world. A corollary of such a misguided idea is that Diaspora Jews, accustomed to living among Gentiles, could not care less about the isolationist obsession with purity that allegedly characterized Palestinian Judaism. Such a picture of Diaspora Judaism ultimately provides a convenient backdrop against which traditional reconstructions of Christian origins posed Paul and his "invention" of a universalizing and anti-Jewish type of Christianity. To make my criticism as brief as possible, I will simply say that this entire representation rests on two shaky assumptions: that Christianity developed into a form of religion "free" of concerns about impurity and that Jews were the only inhabitants of the

ancient world for whom such concerns counted to a particularly high and almost obsessive degree.

Leaving aside the problems inherent in the first presupposition (which will not be discussed here), it is worth rebutting once more the old-fashioned description of ancient Judaism behind the second one. Several authoritative scholars over the past twenty years have thoroughly rejected the polemical fantasy of a religion permeated by separatism and a narrow-minded focus on the danger of contamination.[3] From an evidentiary point of view, its cogency largely rests on an uncritical reading of Paul's polemical attacks against his adversaries. Later Christian theologians and historians have simply taken at face value (with negative results) some of Paul's harshest statements, which are clearly attuned to contingent rhetorical situations. Moreover, it is easy to see that most of the anti-Jewish attacks that occur in early Christian texts are borrowed almost wholesale from the flourishing Greco-Roman rhetoric of slander against foreign groups and cultures. Indeed, the weird or even threatening character of Jewish religious practices is made a subject of mockery or even hatred by several ancient authors. But it is worth stressing that this does not happen to Jews more than to other non-Greek and non-Roman ethnic groups. In fact, concerns about purity were common to all Mediterranean cultures in antiquity and, as some anthropologists would probably say, to all human cultures in any given period. Greeks as well as Egyptians and Jews had preoccupations about preserving and restoring purity, in particular with reference to their respective religious rituals. In this regard, the only historically relevant difference is that Jews considered as sources of defilement specific objects or animals or human beings in certain situations, while, for instance, Egyptians tended to follow a different purity system. The main reason why scholars of New Testament and early Christianity tend to associate purity concerns exclusively or preeminently with Judaism is the persistent influence of an anti-Jewish prejudice grounded on anachronistic theological premises.[4]

Thus, as far as the episode of the Gerasene demoniac is concerned, one should not immediately read the reference to an "unclean spirit" as proof of the influence of a Jewish tradition. In the abstract, such a reference could well come from a Greco-Roman context, even though an equally "unclean spirit" is exorcized by Jesus in a synagogue of Capernaum in 1:23–28. The issue must be resolved through a careful philological evaluation in order to ascertain the most likely background behind Mark's use of the phrase. In this perspective, the answer emerges in quite a clear way, since the designation "unclean spirit" seems not to have significant parallels in the Greco-Roman texts that deal

with possession and exorcism. Most of the materials suitable for this type of comparison are to be found among the "magic papyri."[5] Within this hetero-geneous *corpus,* one encounters plenty of phrases that recall other Markan uses (and that are in all likelihood influenced by the New Testament), but no "spirits" are ever designated as ἀκάθαρτα.[6]

Up to the discovery of the Qumran documents, one would have been hard-pressed to find a Jewish antecedent for the Markan "impure spir-its."[7] Nevertheless, what is probably the Hebrew counterpart of the Greek ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα has surfaced in a handful of meaningful instances among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The text that can prove most useful for the purpose of a comparison with Mk 5:1–20 is the very fragmentary 4Q444 (or 4QIncantation).[8] From the little that can be reconstructed with a relatively high degree of confidence, it appears that 4Q444 is the transcript of an exor-cistic formula, of which other exemplars are attested at Qumran. For the time being it will suffice to note that the text is designed to exorcize several types of evil entities. As happens quite often in this genre of prayers and power rituals, the varied names and categories of evil spirits against which the exorcism is performed were in all likelihood spelled out in a rather long and detailed list. Thus, no one of them could escape the intended effect by taking advantage of loopholes in the formulae. As far as 4Q444 is concerned, the enumerative section of the prayer is badly damaged to the point that only two names from those that were originally included are preserved. However, in line 8 of the first column it is possible to read the pair *mmzrym wrwḥ ḥṭm'h* ("bastards and the spirit of impurity"). I will return to the "bastards" (*mmzrym*), which must be taken as a technical demonological designation. The other designation oc-curring in 4Q444 provides a first parallel to the association between exorcism and the "impure spirit" that one encounters in Mk 5:1–20 as well as in other passages of the Gospels.

Another interesting occurrence of the *rwḥ ṭm'h* is in 11Q5 (or 11QPsᵃ). The latter is a much longer roll that contained a mixture of psalms attested else-where—either in the Hebrew Bible or in the Greek and Syriac traditions—and completely new pieces, as is the case for the text in column 19, which will be the object of our analysis. The better part of the eighteen lines of this column comprise a prayer whose form and contents recall several instances of laments and pleas for divine protection that one encounters in various strands of the biblical tradition. The speaker of the prayer asks God for help in a situation of distress and enumerates the previous occasions on which God

has provided deliverance. The concluding section of the psalm focuses on actual requests, mainly for forgiveness of sins and purification from iniquity (lines 13–16)[9]:

> Forgive my sins, LORD,
> and purify me from my iniquity. Favor me with a spirit of faith and
> knowledge [*rwḥ ʾmwnh wdʿt ḥwnny*]. Let me not dishonor myself
> with transgression.[10] Let not a satan or a spirit of impurity rule over me
> [*ʾl tšlṭ by śṭn wrwḥ ṭmʾh*]. Let not pain
> or evil inclination take possession of my bones [*mkʾwb wyṣr rʿ ʾl yršw
> bʿṣmy*].

As several scholars note, that the prayer presents a parallelism between a "spirit of faith and knowledge" and a "spirit of impurity" may lead one to think that what is meant here is a very abstract entity, altogether different from the "spirit of impurity" seen in the exorcism of 4Q444. However, this would not be an appropriate conclusion. In fact, the prayer assumes that the "spirit of impurity" can control a human being. Even more importantly, the action of controlling can be carried out also by a *śṭn,* which—regardless of its being taken as a personal name or a generic label[11]—cannot be anything but the identification of a demonic entity. In addition, it is interesting to note that the protection from demonic possession is included within requests that are typical of the "mainstream" biblical tradition. Sanders underscores this point by remarking that the prayer is "mostly biblical in vocabulary, style, form, and ideas."[12] That the hymn is included in an anthology whose other pieces have more "normal" features itself demonstrates that exorcisms and other similar apotropaic rituals were not a marginal matter as far as the community of Qumran was concerned. On the contrary, it seems that prayers designed to repel demonic influences and even possessions were a regular part of the liturgical activities.

I will return to the communal use of these materials and to their significance for our understanding of exorcistic practices and discourses in the Second Temple period. However, before moving on to that issue, I must spend a few words on the pairing of "spirits of impurity" and "bastards" (*mmzrym*) encountered in the fragmentary 4Q444. The apparently puzzling term *mmzrym* occurs again in one of the best-known "magic" texts from Qumran, the so-called *Songs of the Maskil* (4Q510 and 4Q511).[13] The two fragmentary scrolls seem to have contained two versions of the same hymns, whose exorcistic

character is quite evident. One of the best-preserved passages from 4Q510 has an interesting list of demonic entities whose attacks are turned away by the recitation of the prayer:[14]

> And I, a *maskil,* proclaim the majesty of his beauty to frighten and terrify all the spirits of the angels of destruction and the spirits of the bastards [*kwl rwḥy ml'ky ḥbl wrwḥwt mmzrym*], demons, Lilith, howl- ers and yelpers.

In this case the "bastards" appear as the "spirits of the bastards" (*rwḥwt mmzrym*), a formula that also clarifies the reason behind their pairing with the "spirits of impurity" in 4Q444. From a comparison between the lists of demonic designations in 4Q444 and here in 4Q510–511, most scholars conclude that these "spirits" are impure exactly because they are "bastards." Thus, the latter feature is taken as an implied reference to their origin from the illegitimate intercourse between fallen angels and women, a mythical episode that runs through several strands of the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period and to which I will return soon.[15] In the few lines from 4Q510 cited above, the "spirits of the bastards" are paired with the less transparent "spirits of the angels of destruction" (*rwḥy ml'ky ḥbl*). In principle, their designation as "angels" ought to distinguish these entities from the "bastards," who were actually half angels and half humans and are indicated—as we will see—in most texts as "giants." However, it might be possible to resolve this apparent contradiction by noting that the destructive nature that characterizes these spirits is in all likelihood another implied reference to the sinful and defiling actions of the "giants."[16]

A rubric written above the two preserved hymns connects them with the *maskil,* a figure of authority within the community, who clearly was charged with the responsibility of reciting them.[17] The apotropaic function of the prayers is effected through and by the glorification of God's power and beauty, which is expected to provoke fear and terror in the demons and force them to stay away from the members of the community or flee if they have already infiltrated it.[18] In several respects 4Q510 and 4Q511 show the same literary and stylistic features noted above in the case of 11Q5. This state of affairs makes it difficult to distinguish these texts from "mainstream" biblical compositions but for their exorcistic and apotropaic elements. The same is true also for another similar scroll, 11Q11 (also known as 11QApocryphal Psalms), which carries an otherwise unknown hymn and a version of Ps 91, the apotropaic psalm *par excellence.* In the latter case as well, the exorcisms—attributed to

David, whose reputation as protector against demons was quite widespread in the Second Temple period[19]—are clearly expected to be part of the "normal" liturgical activities of the community.

These observations underscore the problematic nature of attaching the "magic" label to the Qumran texts reviewed above. Indeed, Bohak reaches the same conclusion by noting—with respect to 4Q510 and 4Q511—that these hymns were in all likelihood known only to the Qumran community and were probably part of their liturgical cycle.[20] As in several other cases the core problem is to be found in the unhelpfulness and intractability of "magic" as an analytical tool. On the one hand, exorcisms and other apotropaic texts such as the Qumran pieces discussed here are regularly categorized as "magic." Thus, they are to be understood as techniques and rituals of power employed by individuals in "private" contexts to obtain personal advantages (in this case, the protection from malevolent spiritual entities). On the other hand, the very texts examined above are universally recognized as having been at least part of the liturgical life of the group. Thus, they belonged to a pattern of use that is considered "public" by most religious studies scholars. John Lyons and Andy Reimer have raised exactly this point in an important article that focuses on the way in which the application of the "magic" label to the analysis of 4Q510 and 4Q511 obfuscates the many ties between these texts and some "core" Qumran documents such as 1QS.[21] Since even in those cases in which authors—such as Philip Alexander—have made an effort to treat "magic" with due care the results have been problematic, Lyons and Reimer's conclusion that the label should be abandoned altogether in the study of Qumranic materials is entirely convincing. Such a conclusion ought to be extended also beyond the relatively narrow domain of Qumran studies. In this respect it is particularly worth emphasizing the negative theoretical role of the combination and overlap of the two binaries of "magic/religion" and "private/public." In the following sections, there will be other opportunities to see how these effects are felt in the interpretation of Mk 5 with equally problematic consequences.

SPIRITS OF DEAD GIANTS

I have shown in the previous pages that the phrase ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα, which is often encountered in the Gospel of Mark in connection with cases of demonic possession, ought to be traced back to a Second Temple Jewish background.[22] However, while the Qumran texts reviewed above offer a good

comparison from a philological point of view, it is hardly conceivable that they directly influenced the author of Mark or even the Jesus traditions that are collected in the Gospel.[23] In all likelihood both Mark and the apotropaic texts from Qumran are re-elaborating, independent of each other, widespread Second Temple Jewish traditions concerning "impure spirits." These mythological tales concerned the surviving relics of the "giants," the mythical descendants of angels whose fall took place in the antediluvian age.[24] Archie Wright and Nicholas Elder have highlighted this connection with Gospel demonology in general and even with the exorcism of Mark 5:1–20. So it is important to retrace the retellings of this mythical event, because it clearly plays a significant role in shaping the Markan understanding of the malevolent entities against which exorcisms provide protection.[25]

The beginning of this trajectory is now identifiable in the first section of 1 Enoch, the so-called Book of the Watchers. This work is preserved in a complete version only in Ethiopic but certainly goes back to an Aramaic original variously dated between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century BCE. Several fragments of this Aramaic text have been found at Qumran. The book contains a narrative detailing the descent of some angels to earth and the dire consequences of their unnatural union with human women:[26]

> These and all the others with them took for themselves wives from among them [humans] such as they chose. And they began to go in to them, and to defile themselves through them, and to teach them sorcery and charms, and to reveal to them the cutting of roots and plants. And they conceived from them and bore to them great giants. And the giants begat Nephilim, and to the Nephilim were born [. . .]. And they were growing in accordance with their greatness.
> They were devouring the labor of all the children of humankind, and human beings were not able to supply them.
> And the giants began to kill human beings and to devour them.
> And they began to sin against the birds and beasts and creeping things and the fish, and to devour one another's flesh. And they drank the blood.

The passage is connected in complex ways, which will not be discussed here, with the brief mention of the "sons of God" and their union with women in Gn 6:1–4. For the purposes of the present treatment, it will suffice to under-

score that the biblical "sons of God" are understood here as angels and that the enigmatic "Nephilim" or "heroes of the past" from Genesis are here their superhuman offspring. Defilement and impurity play a significant role in this account, since both the union between angelic and human beings and the consequent predisposition of the giants to excess and violence are identified as dramatic sources of uncleanness for the world. The same themes were developed also in the so-called Book of Giants, an Aramaic composition that was present at Qumran and that is unfortunately preserved only in fragments.[27] Because of the outrageous acts committed by the giants and the disruption that these bring into human and animal life on earth, God is moved to punish them by provoking their self-destruction:[28]

> And to Gabriel he said, "Go Gabriel, to the bastards, to the half-breeds, to the children of miscegenation; and destroy the children of the watchers from among the children of humans; send them against one another in a war of destruction."

In this section of 1 Enoch the divine action against the giants is paralleled with the binding of their parents, the fallen angels, entrusted to Raphael (vv. 4–8) and to Michael (vv. 11–14). The Flood is designed to strike the rest of the earth (vv. 1–3) but for the warning sent out to Noah through the angel Sariel. Thus, the Enochic narrative maintains the connection between the sin of the angels and the Flood in the same way in which these materials are ordered in Genesis 6. In later retellings of the same mythological episode, as we will see, the two elements will be superimposed and the death of the giants will come about through the Flood too. The form of the mytheme extant in 1 Enoch envisages the destruction of the giants as self-inflicted, because God instigates an internecine war among them, with the consequence that the giants kill each other off. Such means of punishment is thematically coherent with the violence and brutality that characterizes the nature of the children of the angels.[29] In turn, as illustrated above, such violent and overbearing disposition is mythologically understood as the product of the unnatural unions that have produced the giants to begin with.[30] The point is emphasized in the extant Greek translations of the passage (10:9) by designating the giants with the terms κίβδελοι (employed literally for "adulterated" coins and here applied in a metaphorical sense for the "hybrid" natures of this offspring) and μαζήρεοι (which is quite clearly a calque of the Hebrew *mmzr* that we have encountered above in the Qumran demonological texts).[31]

The mixed nature of the giants is also the cause of their partial survival and of their transformation into the demonic entities who are the focus of the current discussion (15:8–11):[32]

> 8 But now the giants who were begotten by the spirits and flesh—they will call them evil[33] spirits on the earth, for their dwelling will be on the earth. 9 The spirits that have gone forth from the body of their flesh are evil spirits, for from humans they came into being, and from the holy watchers was the origin of their creation. Evil spirits they will be on the earth, and evil spirits they will be called. 10 The spirits of heaven, in heaven is their dwelling, but the spirits begotten on the earth, on the earth is their dwelling. 11 And the spirits of the giants <led astray>, do violence, make desolate, and attack and wrestle and hurl upon the earth and <cause illnesses>.

The hybrid nature of the giants is the cause of their downfall and of their ultimate resilience, since the heavenly element that has been implanted in them by the Watchers cannot die with their body, so that they continue to exist as "spirits." In this new form of existence, however, their violent attitude continues to determine their fate. Now they persecute human beings in ways that—despite the very fragmentary preservation of the passage—1 Enoch describes primarily as physical pain and illness.

The mytheme that occurs for the first time in the Book of the Watchers is further developed in a retelling from Jubilees. In the latter text—consistent with the general orientation of the work—the theme of the impure nature of the giants' generation is again the main narrative focus. But this recounting clearly identifies the Flood as the means through which God punishes the uncleanness brought about by the Watchers (7:21).[34] Again, the flawed nature of the giants leads them to spread injustice over the earth, mainly through the shedding of blood either of their fellow giants or of innocent human and animal beings.[35]

The new element introduced in Jubilees concerns the ways in which the surviving spirits of the giants are active after the Flood. The text describes these "impure demons" as misleading Noah's grandchildren by driving them to foolishness and self-destruction. As a remedy to such a dire situation, Noah's sons appeal to their father, who in turn prays to God. Noah's long prayer is a great example of an exorcistic hymn in many respects analogous to the ones from Qumran surveyed above. It both contains a recounting of God's mighty protective actions and a request to "bind" the giants' spirits.[36] Inter-

estingly enough, God at first grants Noah's request. However, the outcome—the complete eradication of demonic activity—is clearly at odds with what the author of Jubilees assumes to be the current state of affairs in the world, with demons wielding actual power over human beings. Thus, the narrative continues with a counter-request from Mastema, the leader of the spirits. He points out to God that, if all his minions were to be bound, he would not be able to carry out his main task: to punish human beings for their wickedness until the final judgment (10:8). The compromise solution consists in leaving a tenth of the spirits free to act, while giving Noah's offspring recipes to defend themselves from their nefarious influence (10:11–13):[37]

> 11 We [the good angels] acted in accord with his entire command. All of the evil ones who were savage we tied up in the place of judgment, while we left a tenth of them to exercise power on the earth before the satan. 12 We told Noah all the medicines for their diseases with their deceptions so that he could cure (them) by means of the earth's plants. 13 Noah wrote down in a book everything (just) as we had taught him regarding all the kinds of medicine, and the evil spirits were precluded from pursuing Noah's children.

Despite its logical awkwardness, the rewriting in Jubilees undoubtedly achieves a few important goals on a narrative and etiologic plan. First, it inscribes the existence and power of the demons into a scenario that preserves God's control over the cosmos. At the same time, it provides the foundations for the human techniques that might prevent demonic activities. From a historical point of view, to establish the presence of this Enochic mytheme in Jubilees goes a long way toward explaining what theological and demonological doctrines might have stood behind the references to "bastards" and "impure spirits" that one encounters in the Qumran documents. Indeed, both 1 Enoch and Jubilees are well attested among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the significance of their influence on the religious thoughts of the community is generally accepted.

In a later period, the story of the fallen angels and the giants will remain widespread and culturally productive, particularly in the early Christ movement. Indeed, even after the composition of the Gospels, the mytheme surfaces quite often in the second century, mostly in connection with the polemical accusation that "pagan" idolatry had found its origins in demonic illusions. Thus, a very telling instance occurs in Athenagoras's *Embassy for the Christians,* a text dated to the second half of the second century. Athenagoras

presupposes the entire story of the giants being born from the unnatural union between angels and women as well as that of the survival of their "souls" as demons.[38] Moreover, the apologist also features the theme of the demonic desire of enjoying fleshly pleasures through the control of human bodies.[39] These and other texts that would be too long to examine here in detail[40] demonstrate that—albeit in confused ways, as we shall see—well into the second century Christian authors were quite familiar with the Enochic mytheme of the giants' spirits surviving as demons.

In sum, it is possible to conclude that the Markan identification of "unclean spirits" as the entities responsible for harmful possessions throughout the Gospel serves to highlight the foreign character of these presences. As we have seen already in the preceding chapter, it is quite common cross-culturally for "spirits" involved in episodes of possession to carry unmistakable signs of Otherness in their behavior and in their mythical origin. In the case of the Markan "unclean spirits," their being the product of forbidden unions between superhuman and human natures as well as their destructive cannibalistic proclivities fit such expectations quite well. We will see later how such a state of affairs is relevant for a performative reading of the exorcism described in Mk 5.

DEMONS AMONG THE TOMBS

The preceding analysis has shown that the apparently enigmatic phrase "unclean spirits," which one encounters in Mk 5:1–20 as well as in other Markan pericopes concerning exorcism, is linked to Second Temple Jewish traditions on the original sin of the fallen angels and the consequent birth of the demons who now possess human beings. In this perspective, it is worth posing the question whether the "uncleanness" that characterizes the spirits in Mark is passive or active. Does it infect merely the spirits themselves by causing their destruction and their current condition of permanent restlessness and "envy"[41] or can the "spirits" lead humans to become "impure" when they possess them? The latter seems to be the situation at Qumran and in Jubilees, as seen in the texts reviewed above.

Most commentators choose the second alternative when they take this opening reference to "impurity" as a hermeneutical key that ought to be employed to unlock the meaning of the entire pericope in Mk 5. Thus, by reviewing the literature on Mk 5 one can see how "impurity" becomes a dominant theme to the point that it must be shoehorned into the narrative even with

reference to elements that have frankly little to do with it. Such interpretive development becomes very problematic when the pure/impure binary is read as the signifier of an opposition between Paganism and Judaism, another binary that the pericope never thematizes, not even in an implicit way.[42]

For instance, in a classic form-critical study of Mk 5, Franz Annen is concerned to demonstrate that the narrative should not be taken "merely" as an exemplification of Jesus's exorcistic power. One should see it as a "parable," an allegorical representation of the salvation that Jesus brings to the idolatrous Gentiles. In this perspective, every little element in the story becomes a cipher. Thus, Annen takes not only the tombs and the pigs as "signs" that hint at pagan idolatry, but even the minor details that the demoniac used to cry on the hills (v. 5) or that he was naked (v. 15) indicate the "orgiastic cults" that are sparsely attested in the region.[43]

Unfortunately, the picture does not change radically when one looks at more recent interpretations, even if they adopt different methodological approaches. For instance, in a recent contribution that appropriately applies insights drawn from cultural anthropology to the exegesis of Mk 5, Carmen Bernabé Ubieta opens the entire treatment by stating forcefully that the language of the narrative emphasizes the role of "impurity."[44] However, most of the elements she identifies to support her claim are doubtful at best: for instance, in the very first lines of the essay, simply assuming that the reference to a "pagan territory" (that of Gerasa) would have implied "impurity" for the readers is problematic. In fact, there is little or no evidence to support the claim that Jews would have considered all the territories outside the Land of Israel impure *tout court*. Likewise, when Bernabé Ubieta again discusses the nudity of the demoniac before his healing, it is doubtful that this trait actually implies the "impurity" of the man in addition to his dishonorable and shameful state.[45] Once more, the effort of reading uncleanness behind the narrative of Mk 5 (or, even worse, a principled opposition between Paganism and Judaism) implies the introduction of elements that seem foreign to the text. This procedure runs the risk of buying into the polemical construction of Jewish culture as narrow-mindedly focused on an isolationist effort to preserve absurd standards of purity.

Nevertheless, the very fact that one of the main characters in the narrative is an "unclean spirit" (as well as the implicit link between such a designation and the Enochic mytheme illustrated above) warrants further consideration of the role of "uncleanness" in Mk 5. The means to address such an exegetical issue, however, must be a little more sophisticated than an immediate

superimposition of purity concerns and Judaism. Indeed, it should give one pause that "unclean spirits" such as the one of Mk 5 occur also elsewhere in the Gospel (most tellingly in Mk 1:23, in an exorcism performed by Jesus in a synagogue) ostensibly without raising any purity debates. Indeed, even the detail of the residence of the demoniac being among the "tombs" (μνημεῖον in v. 2 and μνῆμα in vv. 3 and 5) that figures so prominently at the beginning of the narrative should not necessarily be read as signifying Jewish concerns about the impurity of graves.[46]

Following a seminal observation of Douglas Geyer,[47] Adela Yarbro Collins suggests a different interpretive angle. The dwelling of the demoniac among tombs may be taken as a hint that the spirit possessing him was that of a violently killed person according to a belief that is quite well attested for the Hellenistic and early Roman period. While this observation is most certainly right, it is worth considering whether and in what way it may fit the previous identification of the demon as the surviving spirit of one of the mythical giants. The point may become clearer by referring to a story that shows some superficial differences from, but also remarkable structural similarities to, that of the Gerasene demoniac.

The narrative concerns Philinnion, a young Macedonian girl, and survives among the "amazing" stories collected by Phlegon of Tralles in his Περὶ θαυμασίων ("On marvels"), a paradoxographical work datable to the reign of Hadrian.[48] The story begins with the death of Philinnion immediately after her marriage to Krateros.[49] Six months after the tragic loss, a young man, Machates, is hosted in their house by the two parents of Philinnion, Charito and Demostratus. Machates is housed in a guest room and, during the first night that he spends there, a young and attractive woman visits him, declares that she is in love with him, and has sexual intercourse with him. This being a highly irregular union, Machates does not tell his hosts anything about these events, and the secret encounter takes place again on the following night. At dawn the girl leaves, but the two lovers exchange gifts on each night: a golden ring and a breast-band to Machates and an iron ring and a golden chalice to the woman. At this point the narrative has its decisive (and typically novelistic) twist, because an old maid of the house happens to peek into Machates's room while he is with the mysterious woman and the latter turns out to be none other than Philinnion. The maid alerts the parents to their daughter's apparent return from the dead. Thus, on the third night, both Demostratus and Charito rush into the room and discover the two lovers. The girl is indeed the revived Philinnion and, questioned by her parents, she complains that

Demostratus and Charito, through their intervention, have barred her from completing the three days granted her by the gods:[50]

Ὦ μῆτερ καὶ πάτερ, ὡς ἀδίκως ἐφθονήσατε μοι μετὰ τοῦ ξένου ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ πατρῴᾳ οἰκίᾳ λυποῦσαν οὐδέν. Τοιγαροῦν ὑμεῖς μὲν πενθήσετε ἐξ ἀρχῆς διὰ τὴν πολυπραγμοσύνην, ἐγὼ δὲ ἄπειμι πάλιν εἰς τὸν διατεταγμένον τόπον: οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ θείας βουλήσεως ἦλθον εἰς ταῦτα.

O mother and father, how unjustly you have begrudged me the opportunity of being for three days with the guest in the paternal house without causing pain to anyone. For now you will suffer again from the beginning because of your nosiness, while I will go back again to the place assigned to me: for I did not come here without divine sanction.

Then, the girl immediately falls dead again. The knowledge of these events spreads at once throughout the city of Amphipolis. The popular turmoil forces the governor Hipparchos[51] to inspect the matters more closely, beginning with the tomb in which Philinnion has originally been laid to rest. There no body is found, but the inspection reveals the presence of the gilded chalice and iron ring that Machates has given to the ghost of Philinnion. This confirmation of the supernatural events that have transpired throws the city into a veritable "terror" (θόρυβος) that is assuaged only when Hyllus, a reputable μάντις, proposes a series of atoning sacrifices and purificatory practices that should be enough to appease the gods. The story ends with the remark that Machates takes his life "for the depression" (ὑπ᾽ ἀθυμίᾳ).

Despite the undeniable novelistic and erotic traits of Philinnion's tragic story, its core elements show important resemblances with Mk 5, particularly when the latter is seen against the backdrop of the Enochic mytheme about the spirits of the giants. Philinnion's story should be contextualized within the ancient Greek belief that certain classes of dead are liable to come back to haunt the living.[52] The "restless dead" usually come from three partially overlapping and sometimes ill-defined groups: the ἄωροι (those who have died in an "untimely" fashion), the ἄταφοι (those who have remained "unburied" or have not received the expected burial rites), and the βιαιοθάνατοι (those who have died a "violent death," either because they have been murdered or because they have committed suicide). Philinnion clearly belongs in the first category, since Proclus—in his summary of the story—notes that she

died right after her marriage, in all likelihood before giving birth to a child or even consummating her marriage. Indeed, Greek female ghosts seem to have been often ἄωροι. Thus, the "untimeliness" of their deaths ought to be understood as the failure to reach one of the expected "thresholds" of human life, which, in the case of women, are identified preeminently with marriage and childbearing.[53]

From an anthropological point of view, the defining feature of all these three groups of "restless dead" is their liminal state. Death has cut short the lives of all these *revenants* before they could reach one of the decisive water-shed points of human existence (be that childbearing or marriage or burial). Several ethnographic studies illustrate that all cultures have practices and rites of passage whose primary goal is classifying individuals within broad catego-ries appropriate to each stage of their biological development. Failing to fit into the system provokes imbalances that in turn produce destructive con-sequences, both for the individuals involved and for their social group as a whole. Such ideological systematization also supports the Greek stories about the "restless dead," since they come from such an "uncategorized" situation and their very presence forebodes catastrophes that must be avoided through appropriate ritual practices. It is easy to see how the Enochic mytheme of the giants can fit such a scenario well. Indeed, the giants too are at the very least both "untimely" and "violent" dead.[54] As illustrated above, already at their birth the giants were outside the pattern of normal socio-cultural categoriza-tions, but the negative consequences of their hybrid nature are strengthened by the unusual character of their bodily death. Thus, the spirits of the giants are exceptionally likely to become "restless dead." In this perspective, the de-tail that the Gerasene demoniac lives among tombs and on the hills makes good sense both as a hint to the ghostly nature of the spirit who possesses him (as Geyer notes) and as a signifier of the "displaced" existence of the demon, which lurks somewhere outside the normal boundary that separates the liv-ing from the dead. Such a state of displacement obviously generates impurity and (as we will see) calls for extraordinary cleansing practices. However, it is important to repeat that such a contamination does not carry a specific Jewish overtone, since its inherent danger is perfectly understandable for a non-Jewish reader as well.

An additional analogy between the Greek belief in "restless dead" and the Enochic mytheme concerning the origin of demons regards the reasons that move these demonic beings to possess human beings. We have already seen that the surviving spirits of the giants are led toward human bodies by their

desire to taste those fleshly pleasures that are forbidden to purely spiritual beings. In the story of Philinnion too, the return of the girl to life is explained (as often happens for the "untimely" dead) through her desire—or even need—to experience love as in the "natural" course of human life. In both of these accounts (and in several others in which one encounters the "restless dead") the attraction for human bodies is explained as a form of "envy" of the dead for the living. "Envy" is a well-known phenomenon in Mediterranean societies governed by an ideological structure of "limited good." While the mechanics of "envy" in interhuman relationships are readily apparent,[55] the cases of Philinnion or of the spirits of the giants illustrate how they can also apply to the relations between the living and the dead or between human and superhuman beings. Thus, the dead giants are thought to perceive their deprivation of the ability to enjoy bodily pleasures as a direct result of the human capacity of doing it. The resulting "envy" becomes the justification for the demons' malevolent attacks on human beings. The connection between "envy" and "evil eye" is equally well known, so that it is far from surprising to see that "evil eye" language surfaces quite often in Greek narratives concerning the "restless dead."[56] As a final point on the issue of analogy, one might note that Philinnion's return from the dead—even discounting the disruptive intervention of her parents—is explicitly presented as limited in time and subject to divine sanction,[57] as it happens for the control on human beings that is granted in a limited fashion to demons in Jubilees.

Indeed, the usual means by which the "restless dead" harm their victims is by causing sickness and in some cases madness.[58] For instance, even the fearsome Erinyes who persecute Orestes in Aeschylus's tragic trilogy, despite all their belligerent songs (both when he is indicted by his father Agamemnon's ghost for his failure to avenge him and when he is attacked on behalf of his murdered mother Clytemnestra), never physically assault him but cast on him an aura of madness and social marginalization. Such a scenario is reminiscent of the description of the demoniac's behavior in Mk 5, both in his dwelling at the margins of the city (among the tombs and on the hills) and in the traits of madness that characterize his unsocial attitudes, as—for instance—in his nudity[59] and in the citizens' failed attempts to bind him. The latter element, in particular, constitutes a significant connection to another classic example of the harmful attacks brought about by the vengeful spirit of the restless dead. In *Prometheus Bound* the main character is visited in his prison by Io, a young maiden who has been loved by Zeus. Io, because of Hera's jealousy, has been transformed into a cow subjected to the surveillance

of Argos, a giant hundred-eyed shepherd. Hermes is sent by Zeus to kill Argos and free Io, but, since the spirit of the slain shepherd now requires vengeance (as a βιαιοθάνατος), it turns to persecute Io, understood as the one responsible for his murder. In the tragedy, Io tells Prometheus her story. She is forced to wander without end by the εἴδωλον Ἄργου (the "ghost of Argos"), which—in agreement with the traditional form of the myth—takes the shape of a "gad-fly" (οἶστρος).[60] The maiden's description of her purposeless and wild wanderings compares quite well with that of the demoniac's behavior in Mk 5.

It is worth emphasizing that the association—apparent in Mk 5—between the Enochic myth concerning the giants and Greek beliefs regarding the spirits of "restless dead" should not be taken as a surprising phenomenon for a Jewish author of the first century CE. In fact, the identification between "demons" (the demoniac is designated by various forms of δαιμονίζομαι in vv. 15, 16, and 18[61]) and vengeful or malevolent spirits of the dead is well known to other Jewish writers of the first century CE. For instance, Philo mentions the "demons" of Gaius's deceased wife while discussing—with particularly dark humor—the murder of the emperor's father-in-law: πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς δαίμοσι τῆς ἀποθανούσης γυναικός, εἰ πατέρα μὲν ἐκείνης ἑαυτοῦ δὲ γενόμενον πενθερὸν μεταστήσεται, δολοφονεῖ ("[Gaius] killed treacherously [Marcus Silanus], as if he were to send 'many greetings' to the spirits of his deceased wife by dispatching her father, who had also become his father-in-law").[62]

The connection between such terminology and the vengeful spirits of the dead is even clearer in Josephus, for instance when he describes Aristobulus's regret for the murder of his brother Antigonus: καὶ μέχρι τίνος, ὦ σῶμα ἀναιδέστατον, ψυχὴν ὀφειλομένην ἀδελφοῦ καὶ μητρὸς καθέξεις δαίμοσιν; ("Until when, oh most dishonorable body, will you retain a soul that is owed to the spirits of the brother and the mother?").[63] Even more impressive is the way in which Josephus describes an almost direct intervention of the ghosts of the murdered brothers of Antipater to avoid the latter becoming aware of the punishment prepared by his father Herod while he is in Rome: τάχα καὶ τοὺς ἀπαγγέλλειν προηρημένους οἱ τῶν ἀνηρημένων δαίμονες ἀδελφῶν ἐφίμουν ("and maybe the spirits of the murdered brothers kept silent those who had decided to tell him").[64] However, the most telling instance is certainly Josephus's etiology of the demons in the famous passage that describes the way in which the *Baaras* root—a potent force in

exorcisms—should be safely collected: τὰ γὰρ καλούμενα δαιμόνια, ταῦτα δὲ πονηρῶν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπων πνεύματα τοῖς ζῶσιν εἰσδυόμενα καὶ κτείνοντα τοὺς βοηθείας μὴ τυγχάνοντας ("For those that are called demons are the spirits of wicked human beings who possess the living and kill them unless they happen to get help").[65]

Such evidence counteracts the often-repeated statement that the many New Testament demons could not have been—at least in some cases—the souls of "restless dead." In fact, there never was a cultural gap separating "Hellenistic" beliefs on dangerous returning spirits from "biblical" or "Jewish" demonology, thus making the association behind Mk 5 historically impossible.[66] In his very influential entry on δαίμων for the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Werner Foerster states quite apodictically that New Testament demons were not returning spirits because all "early Christians" believed that the souls of the dead were resting in an appropriately appointed place to await the end of time. But such a conclusion is built on several problematic assumptions. First of all, Foerster presupposed a monolithic unity of New Testament beliefs that cannot be entertained anymore as a possibility not only with regard to doctrines of the afterlife but also for almost any other aspect of the thought and practice of ancient Christ groups. Second, even the scenario that Foerster presupposed for the Christ movement does not differ much from what is known about Greek (or generally ancient) beliefs concerning the afterlife. In all cases, the vast majority of the dead were thought to be at rest in some place, while the occasional "restless" spirits are ultimately "abnormal" occurrences, as we have seen above with respect to the categories of "untimely," "unburied," or "violent" dead.

MK 5 AS A RITUAL OF EXORCISM

Now that the mythical identity assigned by Mark to the possessing "spirit" of Gerasa has been clarified, it is time to analyze more closely the means through which its exorcism is performed. In this regard, Mk 5 offers a particularly appealing opportunity, since this is the Gospel pericope in which an exorcism performed by Jesus is related with the most detail. Unfortunately, many of these intriguing features have proved highly puzzling for the hosts of modern readers, as they have approached the text armed with the otherwise effective resources of historical criticism. I have mentioned earlier one potential reason behind this failure of modern critical approaches to deal

satisfactorily with these biblical narratives. Indeed, most of the methodological moves performed in biblical studies rely on fundamental categories whose genealogy goes back to European intellectuals of the modern era. Unfortunately, as several anthropologists and ethnographers note, spirit possession cannot adequately be captured by or even escapes completely such philosophical assumptions. The present treatment will try to overcome such methodological difficulties by reading the episode of Mk 5 as the narrative transposition of a ritual of exorcism. I will draw the needed comparative material from cross-cultural ethnographies of exorcism conducted for the most part in South Asia and Africa.

In this regard it is worth repeating that insights from medical anthropology have contributed greatly to the realization that conceiving illness and its healing as solely organic or individual affairs is a move limited to Western modernity. That move is inextricably tied to the intertwined phenomena of the secularization of the body and the rise of biomedicine.[67] Following the latter trends, traditional New Testament scholarship has systematically discounted the relevance of passages such as Mk 5:14–20 because of their poor fit within the modern narrative about individual personhood and healing as a biomechanical enterprise. Common reductionist strategies to deal with texts such as the ending of the Gerasene episode have been to classify them as secondary additions or—in the classic form-critical analyses—to treat them as "required" elements that offer public sanction for the thaumaturgic power of the individual hero, Jesus of Nazareth. However, ethnographic studies have alerted us to the relevance of socio-cultural conditions in shaping illness and its cure.[68] Thus, it becomes more and more crucial to make the collective and even political aspects of these healing narratives the center of our interpretive efforts.[69] Unfortunately, even those recent studies that have confronted these texts in a more sophisticated way have often ended up casting spirit possession as merely a "reaction" to hegemonic pressure.[70] In so doing they have failed to focus on the positive value of the phenomenon as a cultural means to embody history, reshape identities, and express agency.

In this regard a very telling element is the identification of the possessing "spirit" that has been studied extensively in the preceding sections of this chapter. The previous analysis has shown how the narrative of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac presupposes the creative combination of Second Temple Jewish beliefs on the origin of demons with other Mediterranean folk traditions on the return of the spirits of the dead. As noted above, these motifs are combined to portray the "unclean spirits" of Mark (and that of Mk 5

in particular) as strongly foreign and Other, not only for Jewish readers but for any ancient audience.

We have seen in the previous chapter that foreignness is a typically defining feature of the "spirits" encountered in possession cults cross-culturally. Moreover, it cannot be surprising to observe that an even stronger Otherness appears to characterize those "spirits" that are chased away by exorcists. Bruce Kapferer, in his seminal ethnographic reading of the great exorcisms performed in Buddhist Sri Lanka, appropriately emphasizes how such foreignness—whether of ontological status or of ethical behavior—serves an important formal purpose within the structure of the rituals.[71] Indeed, Kapferer concludes that rites of exorcism can be analyzed adopting the tripartite division originally put forth by Van Gennep. Thus, he traces a movement (both of patients and of their communities) from a state of chaos subject to the disruptive control of the demonic to one of cultural order, in which the divine establishes its expected control over both the demonic and the human domains. In an understanding of ritual structures reminiscent of Victor Turner, Kapferer shows how the above-mentioned trajectory must go through an intermediate phase of liminality. There, exorcism patients are isolated in a state of trance from their social group and are confronted by the power of the demons impersonated—through dance, music, singing, and ultimately again trance—by the exorcists. To achieve such a goal, the liminal stage in these very complex exorcisms is characterized by actions that powerfully perform the Otherness of demons in the eyes of the patient and the audience. Thus, for instance, Kapferer mentions the cooking of an egg in a human skull (an extraordinarily "irregular" practice in the context of Sinhalese Buddhist cultural and religious norms).[72] The same can obviously be said for the exorcism narrated in Mk 5, in which the liminal status of the possessed man is emphasized from the very beginning. This liminality is evident in both his physical location (on the margins of civilized space, among the tombs and hills) and his behavior (harming himself with stones).

As noted repeatedly in the preceding pages, being possessed by a foreign "spirit" is a means through which the myths and histories of a group are literally embodied. Thus, in the Sinhalese exorcisms described by Kapferer, the exorcists who perform the characters of demons through their songs and through their actions are providing a detailed account of Buddhist cosmology and ontology. The same can be said for the Gerasene demoniac and the other Markan characters who are possessed by "unclean spirits." They literally embody the mythical etiology of evil generated by giants and fallen angels whose

textual record is now found only in the writings that belong to the Enochic tradition.[73] Moreover, anthropologists clearly identify possession as a means to embody a group's cultural history. In several cross-cultural cases, the different types of foreign "spirits" that appear in the bodies of their hosts have identities and behaviors that evoke—frequently with parodic overtones—those of other groups that have been or are in contact with that of the possessed.[74] This element also surfaces quite clearly in Mk 5, particularly in the name that the "spirit" attributes to itself and that will be discussed in greater detail below.

Thus, given the embodiment of a mythical and historical past that characterizes episodes of possession, Kapferer suggests understanding exorcism as a hermeneutic exercise applied to the cultural traditions of a given social group.[75] Yet it is important to add that such an exercise not only strengthens the cultural and religious values of the group. In the words of Michael Lambek, it also provides the opportunity for "a serious parody of orthodox religion, social convention or the accepted language of power relations."[76] Such transgressive and creative aspects of spirit possession and exorcism are often obfuscated in New Testament exegesis, because scholars tend to understand the phenomenon of possession merely as a "reaction" in the face of hegemonic oppression.

The advantages of a different interpretive approach are nicely highlighted by a comparison of the classic reading of the Sudanese *zar* cults provided by Ioan Lewis with the more recent interpretation proposed by Janice Boddy. The *zar* and other similar possession cults were widespread until a few decades ago in a vast geographic area including northeastern Africa and the Middle East.[77] *Zar* are actually "spirits" that for the most part possess women and cause illnesses and other discomforts. Possessed individuals are healed by undergoing a ritual in which—through a public performance—the identity of their "spirits" is established and the latter are forced into a period of quiescence that, at its end, will require a new ritual. As noted above, in the case of *zar* too, the possessing "spirits" are envisaged as representatives of Otherness. Thus, for instance, women coming from the strongly patriarchal context of rural Sudan are possessed by the "spirits" of "western women." These "spirits" cause them to ask for items that are regarded as the defining traits of modernized and commoditized foreignness: alcoholic drinks, cigars, or Dove soap bars. In the classic interpretation of Ioan Lewis, such features of women's participation in *zar* possession cults reveal their fundamental nature as "means of insinuating their interests and demands in the face of male constraints." Lewis identifies possession as an "oblique redressive strategy" that enables Sudanese

women to "get back" at their husbands without fundamentally disturbing the patriarchal social structure.[78]

The shortcomings of Lewis's reading, which reduces the meaning of possession to a "safety valve" for oppressed and marginalized individuals, have been abundantly criticized in the anthropological literature. In particular, such an approach significantly undersells the extent to which possession is the locale for expression of personal agency and for communal cultural hermeneutic. In this perspective, Boddy's re-examination of the *zar* cults of northern Sudan evinces a higher degree of sophistication and contributes more productive insights.[79] A good example is Boddy's rich and nuanced description of the ritual dance performed by a Sudanese woman possessed by the "spirit" Luliya, a female Ethiopian prostitute.[80] The "spirit" demands all the accouterments and setting arrangements required to perform a bridal dance epitomizing the virtues and values of shameful and proper Sudanese femininity. Boddy's analysis of the bridal dance, executed by Luliya in the body of her "host," illustrates extraordinarily well how the "cultural hermeneutic" inscribed in the ritual works:

> On one level, a wanton, uncircumcised, nominally Christian alien presumes to dance as a chaste, circumcised, Muslim village woman. In the attempt the spirit tries to suppress its libertine disposition but overcompensates, exaggerating the controlled steps of a bride to the point where simulated Hofriyati drama becomes a spirit farce. [. . .] What the audience actually observes is a normally restrained, circumcised Hofriyati woman in the role of a wanton, uncircumcised alien who in turn "plays" a village woman who is the epitome of restraint and self-control. In looking at the "other," Hofriyati see the other looking at them, while in looking at the woman entranced, they see themselves looking at the other looking at them. The multiple reflection is dramatically sustained . . . then suddenly shatters as Luliya peeks furtively over the hands of its host, giving herself away to the uproarious laughter of its human audience.

Boddy's description shows how the ritual both reinscribes the patriarchal construction of gender roles and, at the same time, affords the patient/artist and the audience an opportunity to look at them from a distance. In particular, through the parodic performance embedded in the possession ritual, Boddy notes that "categories that are largely unquestioned in the course of daily life become problematic in the *zar*."

The interplay between parody of Otherness and reflection on otherwise naturalized socio-cultural meanings described by Kapferer and Boddy emerges in the account of Mk 5 as well. Such a phenomenon is immediately evident when one comes to discuss the actual name of the "spirit" encountered by Jesus in the territory of Gerasa.

"MY NAME IS LEGION"

The first encounter between Jesus and the Gerasene demoniac is described by Mark in a way that does not differ significantly from the struggle against another possessing "spirit" in a synagogue of Capernaum (at Mk 1:24):

> Mk 5:6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; 7 and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

In both cases, the narrative structure is unusual for ancient accounts of exorcism because in both cases the "spirits" actually try to exorcize Jesus as a sort of preemptive move.[81] This is consistent with what has been noted through the ethnographic study of exorcisms. Again, Kapferer illustrates vividly how Sinhalese rituals always entail a dramatic confrontation between demons and exorcists. The latter ultimately defeat their opponents by calling on the superior power of the deities of the Buddhist pantheon. In this regard, such features ought to be considered consistent with the general outline of spirit possession described in the first chapter. For in any instance of possession, a key element is the often highly conflictual negotiation of power between the human "host" and the "spirit." The so-called *Papyri Graecae Magicae* bear witness to a similar situation in the many recipes that have to do with the control of various spiritual beings for divination, harming an opponent, or any other conceivable purpose.[82] In most cases, great care must be devoted to the techniques that enable the "magician" to control or even approach the designated "spirit" in ways that do not prove irritating for the "assistant" and eventually dangerous for the practitioner.[83]

The turning point in the confrontation between Jesus and the "unclean spirit" of Mk 5 is certainly the confession of the latter's name. As universally noted by commentators and supported by the recipes included within the

Papyri Graecae Magicae, knowing the name of a "spirit" is a decisive step in acquiring control over it.[84] Thus, Jesus's success in forcing the "spirit" to admit that its name is "Legion" (Mk 5:9) already signifies to an alert reader the eventual positive outcome of the exorcism.

The striking designation of the demon (or group of them) in verse 9 (λεγιών) has attracted sustained exegetical attention because of the political implications that interpreters have drawn from it. That the demon reveals its name is indeed extraordinary for the Gospel traditions, since this is a unique case among the many accounts of Jesus's exorcisms. This would probably be reason enough to single out the word for a closer examination, but the issue becomes even more relevant when one considers the particular name of this demon. As several exegetes note, designating a demon as "legion" cannot fail to introduce a distinct anti-Roman tone into the entire narrative.[85] There are still some scholars who do not agree on the point, but their arguments are usually not very convincing. In particular, one cannot claim that λεγιών was used generically to indicate a large group without further connotations (on the basis of the qualification ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν, "because we are many," in the same v. 9). While such lexical development is quite possible for a later period,[86] it seems unlikely for the time in which Mark was composed. Indeed, as Joshua Garroway notes in one of the most insightful recent contributions on this pericope, there are simply no instances of such generic use for the time up to the first century CE.[87] Moreover, even if Mark's intention were to highlight the vast number of demons involved, without implying any military connotation, several other Greek words were readily available to him. In short, the choice of λεγιών would necessarily evoke the Roman army to an ancient reader.[88]

Nevertheless, one should also use caution to avoid evaluating incorrectly the role played by political elements such as this reference to the Roman military. Unfortunately, such hasty evaluations have happened quite often in several recent and very learned contributions on Mk 5:[89]

> Mk 5:10 He begged him [Jesus] earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; 12 and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned in the lake.

For instance, Markus Lau discusses at length the problems that would apparently be caused by the fact that the number of the demons (as given by Mark when they enter a herd of "roughly two thousand" pigs in v. 13) does not correspond to what is known about the strength of a Roman legion, which is variously posed by the ancient sources at several thousand members. Lau "solves" the issue by concluding that Mark is referring to a *vexillatio*, a sub-unit of the legion, which is sometimes reported to have operated at a strength of two thousand during the Jewish war of 66–70 CE. While this might be true, there is no need to deploy such complex explanations. As noted again by Garroway, it makes just as much sense to assume that Mark is inserting a high number without really knowing or caring about the exact size or strength of a legion.[90]

To be sure, the vast majority of these interpretive exercises revolve around the pigs and Jesus's decision to transfer the demons into them. Most commentators connect the choice of these animals to the fact that a boar served as the emblem for the Legio X Fretensis, which is well attested as active in the Land of Israel at the time of the war and immediately after it.[91] This may well be true, but surely modern interpreters of Mk 5 go too far when they discuss whether the coordinated movement of the herd is too "un-pig-like" to be taken as anything other than an allegorical reference to army maneuvers[92] or whether the final plunge into the "Sea" of Galilee is covert mockery of the tenth legion's original maritime exploits in the Augustan civil wars.[93] In fact, it may be sufficient to understand the choice of inserting the pigs in the narrative as a device that—by making fun of the demons—strengthens the overall impression of Jesus's sovereign power over them. Again, there is no need to focus on the choice of pigs as something that only Jewish readers could have appreciated. On the contrary, it is clear that ending up inside a pig would not have been very honorable in the eyes of an ancient non-Jewish reader either.

In more substantive terms, it seems that paradoxically, the "political" reading of the pericope, despite its obvious appropriateness, has not been pushed far enough. In this perspective, a major limitation is the failure to coordinate it with the other main aspect of the Gerasene episode, namely the exorcism. In this respect, Klinghardt's recent treatment of Mk 5 is representative of such shortcomings. On the one hand, Klinghardt—committed as he is to understanding the narrative as "thoroughly symbolic"—entirely misses that this is ultimately an exorcism. Thus, for instance, Klinghardt explains the fear of the inhabitants of Gerasa as caused by the financial loss entailed in the demise of the pigs, which in turn stands symbolically for the coveted economic advantages of the Roman presence. But this economic dimension is never explicitly

presented in the pericope. The human fear inherent in any confrontation with the superhuman power of a skilled exorcist appears to be a sufficient explanation. On the other hand, Klinghardt attaches too-concrete (or—less charitably—too-positivistic) meanings to the designation of the possessing demon as "legion." Thus, he tries to demonstrate that Gerasa was "occupied" by Roman troops in the first century, but this attempt ultimately comes up short. Indeed, a reference to the Legio X Fretensis is not enough for this, since the legion is never attested as being even in the vicinity of the Transjordan city in that period.[94]

In particular, Klinghardt's proposal adequately exemplifies the negative effect produced by two misconceptions on Roman domination and on its potential connection to spirit possession and exorcism. As far as the first misunderstanding is concerned, Klinghardt's exegesis relies on the assumption that the Roman domination of Gerasa (and of other cities in the eastern Mediterranean provinces) is adequately described and conceptualized as "occupation." However appealing this notion might be for contemporary applications of New Testament interpretations, the ancient evidence hardly supports the hypothesis that the Romans "occupied" Gerasa (or, for that matter, any other city of the eastern Mediterranean). Both the technical limitations of ancient military deployments and the very Roman idea of an "inexpensive" empire-building process render such a possibility highly unlikely. This is why Klinghardt can find only very scant traces of a direct Roman presence in Gerasa.[95] Indeed, several Roman historians have drawn attention to this phenomenon by pointing out how ancient imperial hegemony is better analyzed by looking at the willful and interested participation and cooperation of powerful provincial elites.[96]

The second problem that emerges in the current interpretations of Mk 5 has to do with the exclusive treatment of exorcism as an allegoric cover (as in Klinghardt's case) or—in the best cases—a kind of proxy for social marginalization or political oppression. I submit that—by consistently reading the pericope as the narrativization of an exorcistic ritual—one might arrive at a more multifaceted understanding of the sophisticated cultural meanings inscribed in the episode. From such a perspective, several elements of the narrative, such as the foreign identity of the "spirit" or its final demise in a strikingly mocking and parodic way, become almost expected set pieces, since all of them feature more or less regularly in cross-cultural accounts of exorcisms.

As noted above, New Testament scholars who are familiar with the anthropological literature on spirit possession have already recognized the need

of exploring the relationship between New Testament exorcisms and sociopolitical situations. However, even in these cases spirit possession is eventually treated merely as a mechanic "reaction" to conditions of marginalization or oppression. Almost no consideration is given to the autonomous role played by possession phenomena in critiquing, reshaping, and even creating cultural meanings and behaviors. Even Amanda Witmer, otherwise very well versed in the current anthropological literature on the subject, fails to develop in full this aspect under the massive intellectual influence exercised by Ioan Lewis's functionalist paradigm.[97] Again, it is worth repeating that the political implications of spirit possession must remain a central interpretive concern, all the more so in the case of a pericope such as Mk 5:1–20 in which they are so clearly in evidence. Indeed, several ethnographic studies in the 1980s and 1990s have emphasized the significance of possession phenomena in dealing with the challenges generated in diverse cultural contexts by the rise of modernization, neo-colonialism, and neo-liberalism.[98] But, as noted above with reference to Boddy's subtle analysis of the Sudanese *zar* cults, interpretive paradigms can also go a step further.

A telling example of the change in anthropological interpretive paradigms in recent years is the trajectory experienced by the scholarly understanding of the *hauka* cults of Niger. The latter were the subject of a 1955 ethnographic movie, *Les maîtres fous* ("The Mad Masters"), filmed by French anthropologist Jean Rouch. Rouch's work has been pioneering and enormously influential in ethnographic filmmaking: *Les maîtres fous,* in particular, is still a powerfully impressive contribution, and its interpretation remains a matter of substantive debate.[99] The film records a ritual performed by Nigerien expatriates in the British colony of the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Rouch's movie depicts the participants in the cult as they take up—in a state of trance—the identities of colonial officials (governor, general, and other lesser military grades) and perform actions that are identifiable as parodic imitations of colonial ceremonies (such as engaging in parades while wielding mock guns made of wood). *Les maîtres fous* provides a shockingly graphic representation of spirit possession, both in the traits that indicate the onset of trance (such as foaming at the mouth) and in the actions connected with it (the brutal killing of a dog, whose meat is later consumed half raw). The result was that the screening of the film was denounced and sometimes prohibited both by colonial authorities decrying the disrespect for European officials and by African intellectuals accusing Rouch of racist prejudice. In part as a reaction to this harsh criticism, Rouch himself began to develop an anticolonialist interpretation of *Les*

maîtres fous and of the phenomenon of *hauka* more broadly. From this perspective, the "mad masters (or teachers)" of the title are not the possessed participants in the rite but the French and British colonizers who have occupied Africa with the goal of "teaching" civilization to the natives. However, their strategy fails miserably, since the product of their domination is the "mad" behavior of their African subjects and the mockery of European culture connected to it. Thus, the anti-imperialist interpretation of the *hauka* possession reads it as an expression of resistance to colonization. However—analogous to what has been seen above with respect to the *zar*—it reduces possession to a "reaction" to social pressures and to a "safety valve" within a functionalist paradigm of interpretation.[100] In fact, as for the *zar* cults examined above, such an approach tells only part of the story.

In recent years, reexaminations of Rouch's *Les maîtres fous* have tried to look at the movie scenes in parallel with traditional possession practices among the Songhai (the ethnic group of most of the Nigeriens on screen in the French film).[101] There—and in agreement with phenomena previously highlighted above—foreign "spirits" take much more diverse shapes and forms than merely those of European colonial officials shown in Rouch's version of the *hauka.* Thus, one encounters relatively benign "spirits" associated with Islam, but also wilder entities, which are traditionally linked to ethnic groups living close to the Songhai. Their Otherness is, not surprisingly, expressed through their "uncivilized" and extreme behaviors, such as eating excrement or cross-dressing. Even if one looks more closely at *Les maîtres fous,* one can see that, alongside the above-mentioned military officials, there appear at least two individuals possessed by the "spirits" of a "train driver" and of a "truck driver." This is not unexpected, since possession is a means through which socio-cultural groups embody their mythological and historical past. It just happens that, in the cases filmed by Rouch in 1955, the identities of the "spirits" enable their Nigerien "hosts" displaced on the Gold Coast to embody the intertwined experiences of modernization and colonialism. There is certainly an element of imitation and parody at play here, but the comparison with more traditional versions of the *hauka* cults shows that something more is going on too. In fact, as observed by Henley, on closer examination it appears that "these powerful Europeans are 'good to think with,' not about the nature of human beings, but about the nature of spirit beings." Indeed, in parallel with what has been seen above in several other cases of spirit possession, "the adepts in a *hauka* ceremony are seeking to gain control of those attributes through a process of mimetic appropriation and, thereby,

take upon themselves all the powers associated with the beings whom those attributes characterize."[102]

The ethnographic case of the *hauka* cult has much to recommend itself for a comparison with the instance of possession described in Mk 5. An obvious element of similarity is the military and colonial identification both of the demon "legion" and of some among the "spirits" captured on screen by Jean Rouch. Moreover, parody and comedy play a structural role in both rituals. Kapferer also notes that comedy is a significant element in the Sinhalese exorcisms that he describes. In the latter case the comic features of the rituals also evoke quite explicitly the socio-political circumstances inhabited by the audiences.[103]

However, like Henley in his re-examination of *Les maîtres fous,* Kapferer also claims that the comic performance inscribed in exorcistic rituals does something more—and something more productive in cultural terms—than merely expressing an ultimately harmless resistance to forms of political domination. Mary Douglas's understanding of comedy as an anti-rite provides the theoretical starting point for Kapferer's reasoning.[104] From this perspective, the comedy inscribed in exorcistic rituals attacks the structure of cultural relationships, but—through this very attack—ultimately functions as a tool to uphold its continuing existence. Thus, in the case of the Sinhalese exorcisms studied by Kapferer, the jokes exchanged among the exorcists and between them and the audience are ultimately at the expense of the demons. The latter are reduced from a state of terrifying and limitless indefiniteness to the more reassuring "reality" of their limits and of their subjection to the truly limitless power of the divine. As Kapferer tells it, this goal is achieved by showing that "spirits" lack the familiarity with the cultural scripts that would be necessary for them to be part of the human world:

> The demons break all manner of cultural and social conventions. The straight man reveals Manu Sanniya as someone who steals ration books, who defecates and urinates on temple grounds, who shaves his head to impersonate a Buddhist monk. Kendi Paliya farts as he stumbles around the arena and drinks pure water from the sacred pond. The demons confuse words and find difficulty in talking everyday Sinhala. Demons are shown to be without the cultural knowledge to act in the society of human beings.[105]

It is easy to see that a similar role is played in Mk 5 by the comic induction into a herd of pigs of the "spirit" Legion. This very detail constitutes an effective way to illustrate the limited nature of demonic power and its consequent

harmlessness for the human realm. Moreover, the final act of the pigs diving into the sea adds an element of subjection to the divine. Whether one takes this additional detail as a flashback to the Exodus 14 story or to the primordial destruction of the giants in the Flood, the cosmological and mythological resonances are unmistakable.

However, Kapferer again notes that comedy and parody do in fact achieve something more than simply reconstituting and upholding cosmological and socio-political structures. Not unlike what Boddy observes with respect to the bridal dance of the *zar* "spirit," performance is the key element of distortion inscribed in the very context of exorcistic rituals. In the Sinhalese rites as well as in the Sudanese cases studied by Boddy, the comedic effect is achieved through actions that take place in front of and sometimes even with the help of an audience. In Kapferer's words:

> Members of the ritual gathering might enter directly, through the comedy, into the subjective understandings of their fellows assembled at the occasions, but they do not form a unity with the comic contexts or comic characters (e.g. the exorcist-dancer). It is the very fact that they can stand apart and objectify aspects of what is presented as distinct from and independent of themselves which enables them to participate in and to recognize the comic. Comedy, and the awareness of the comic, is a celebration of the Attitude of the Other as this is formed in the rationalities of everyday world, and it depends on the fullness of an attention to life [. . .] in all its varied and frequently inconsistent and contradictory dimensions.[106]

The ability to "stand aside" that, to a certain extent, characterizes the audience of a performance is key to achieving comic effects but—more important for the present purposes—is also key to igniting the cultural productivity of spirit possession and exorcism as rituals. The overall structure of the ritual works to "organize" and "stabilize," but—even if only for a moment[107]—the anti-ritual force of the comedy is there to "disorganize" and "destabilize" in ways that produce something new and different at a cultural level.

THE PEOPLE OF GERASA AND THE EXORCIST

The previous sections have shown how the account of Jesus's exorcism in Mk 5 reveals the potent embodiment of mythical ("impure spirit") and historical ("Legion") pasts and presents in the phenomenon of possession.

The ritual of exorcism in turn puts these cultural values through a herme-neutic process that ultimately enables a group to destabilize them, reinscribe them, and tap into their power.

The interconnectedness between comedy and performance in spirit pos-session and exorcisms constitutes a fitting frame for a reading of Mk 5:1–20, in particular because the latter pericope includes an unusually long final sec-tion devoted to the reaction of the Gerasene audience to Jesus's actions. That so much narrative space is given over to the performative aspect of the exor-cism vindicates the choice of reading the pericope as an exorcistic ritual, but it may also prove helpful in solving a few persistent exegetical riddles.

> Mk 5:14 The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the coun-try. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. 17 Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

In this regard, a detail in the conclusion of the pericope that routinely puzzles interpreters (in particular when they are working within a rather rigid form-critical methodological approach) is the fear of the citizens of Gerasa when they see the healed demoniac (v. 15) and their request that Jesus leave their land (v. 17). In the classic form-critical understanding of miracle narratives (of which exorcism is usually considered to be a sub-genre) the only reaction expected from the audience is awe, designed to emphasize better the power of the hero. To account for the odd response of the Gerasenes, many unsatisfac-tory proposals have been advanced. As noted above, some interpreters see in their reaction anger for the financial damage caused by the loss of the pigs (even though pigs actually can swim). Others—intent as they are on making the exorcist Jesus a hero of the anti-Roman cause—must find roundabout ways to explain how the fear of the Gerasenes demonstrates their allegiance to imperial power. Thus, for instance, Hollenbach speculates that the exor-

cism transformed the demoniac "from a passive 'Uncle Tom' into a threatening 'John Brown.'"[108] In almost all of these cases, the fundamental exegetical problem once again appears to be the failure to take sufficiently seriously the nature of the story as an exorcism.

An initial solution can again come from a comparison with the story of Philinnion discussed above. As for Mk 5:1–20, the narrative of Phlegon also contains an apparently disproportionately long conclusion in which the author lingers to describe the dismay and then outright terror of the citizens of Amphipolis when they hear about the return of Philinnion from the dead. Again as in Mk 5, the situation calls for the intervention of a specialist (the μάντις Hyllus), who restores public order through a series of rituals.

Both the collective fear and the intervention of a ritual expert are absolutely "canonical" features of all accounts concerning the restless dead. Another good example is the story of the "Hero" of Temesa, which is narrated *in extenso* by Pausanias but is also known to several other Greek and Latin authors.[109] Pausanias records that Odysseus, amid his travels following the destruction of Troy, stopped at a southern Italian city called Temesa. There, one of Odysseus's soldiers raped a girl of Temesa and was stoned in retaliation by the citizens. Since Odysseus leaves the city without taking care of the burial of his anonymous companion, the δαίμων of the man returns from the dead to haunt and kill the inhabitants of Temesa. In order to appease the spirit, the Temesenes are forced to build a shrine for the δαίμων to be worshiped as a "hero" and to be offered every year the most beautiful virgin of Temesa (it is unclear in Pausanias's and in the other accounts whether what is sacrificed is the virginity or the very life of the girl). The story ends with the arrival at Temesa of Euthymus of Locri, a famous boxer, who promptly falls in love with the girl who must be sacrificed on that year. Thus, he decides to fight the "Hero," who is ultimately forced to leave the city and flee into the sea. The legend of the "Hero" of Temesa contains all the traits of a typical story of the "restless dead," beginning with the origin of the "demon" that—in this case—is both an "unburied" and a "violently" deceased person. As a consequence, his behavior cannot be anything but destructive and harmful, an element that—however toned down in the sadly romantic atmosphere of Philinnion's tale—is always present in these narratives. After all, even in the much more subdued story of Philinnion, the destiny of poor Machates—guilty of having fallen in love with a ghost—is death. The story rationalizes this feature as ἀθυμία, a word that may certainly indicate the disheartened feeling of an abandoned lover but can also be construed as the fearful effect of having come

into contact with the superhuman or the divine. This sense of overstepping the boundary that separates the human and superhuman realms is what ultimately generates the feeling of fear in these legends of the returning dead.[110]

Another similar story concerns Pausanias, the fifth-century BCE Spartan general, on whose postmortem activities we are informed already by Thucydides and by several later texts.[111] After having gloriously led the Greek army in the victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479 BCE, Pausanias became increasingly attracted to power (he was only the regent of Sparta on behalf of the underage son of Leonidas) and started to strike secret deals with the enemy. He was discovered by the ephors but, right before the Spartan authorities could make a move to capture him, Pausanias took refuge as a suppliant within the temple of Athena at the very center of the city of Sparta. Thus, the ephors were forced to seal him within the shrine to let him die of starvation. Thucydides narrates that, at the very moment of his last breath, Pausanias was carried outside the precinct of the temple, so that his death could not defile the sacred place. However, other versions of the story lack this final twist and narrate that Pausanias did indeed die inside the temple, a horrific outcome that forced the Spartans to interrogate the oracle of Delphi in order to know how the ghost of the general could be appeased. Evidently even Thucydides knew about such a version of the story because he preserves the tradition that the Spartans had two statues of Pausanias erected right outside the shrine as a form of exorcism. Plutarch transmits an even clearer account in which the Spartans must hire ψυχαγωγοί (literally "conductors of souls") to appease (ἱλάσασθαι) the ghost (εἴδωλον) of Pausanias with purifications, sacrifices, and γοητείαι and chase it away from the temple where it was disturbing or scaring (ἐξετάραξε) the visitors.[112]

In particular the last example concerning the returning spirit of Pausanias and the required intervention of professional exorcists enables us to contextualize the fear of the Gerasenes. The citizens experience fear when they are faced with Jesus's ability to control the harmful "unclean spirit" in Mk 5. Ancient evidence as well as ethnographic accounts confirm that exorcistic power is often perceived as beneficial and terrifying at the same time, a cultural construction that is underscored by the fact of exorcists frequently being outsiders, either foreigners (as in the texts reviewed above) or otherwise socially marginalized individuals.[113] This observation leads one back to a point that has been repeatedly highlighted in the preceding sections of this chapter. An attention for the audience and for the positive "work" in exorcistic rituals is crucial for any attempt to take seriously the nature of Mk 5:1–20.

Such an approach, however, calls for a much more sophisticated assessment of the socio-cultural situation of Gerasa.[114] Daniel Cohen has recently called for a more precise historical analysis.[115] Cohen's contribution appropriately highlights that a serious bias affects most readings of Mk 5. Indeed, traditional exegeses are deeply invested in understanding the episode as the beginning of a Gentile mission and are constrained by the exceedingly narrow binary Judaism/Paganism. Thus, it is regularly forgotten that the Decapolis in general and Gerasa in particular were "Gentile" lands only in a very relative sense. Cohen helpfully observes that ancient evidence (specifically, the testimony of Josephus) attests to the presence of a sizable Jewish population in Gerasa. Any reading of Mk 5 ought to consider this, but the truth is that this happens rarely, if at all. Nevertheless, Cohen himself seems to go down the same misleading path. His own interpretation, after having rightly called for the due consideration of the Jewish population of Gerasa, ends up with a flattened binary of "Gentile" or "Greek" Gerasa. No attention is paid to the diversity that characterized the city or to the socio-cultural dynamics that can be observed in its first-century CE history.[116]

Indeed, the recurrent exegetical portrait of Jesus walking into a perfectly Hellenistic (and Gentile) Gerasa is hardly supported by the ancient evidence. Such an imagination is mostly the product of biased theological historiography (as Cohen notes) and of a retroprojection of the impressive second-century CE archaeological remains that can be admired at the modern site of Jerash. In fact, we know almost nothing about the Gerasa of the Hellenistic period, either from an archaeological or an epigraphic standpoint. For instance, we learn that the settlement received the honor of becoming a Greek *polis* (in all likelihood from Antiochus IV) merely from the testimony of a lead weight dated to 143/142 BCE, which mentions the name of the city as "Antioch on the Chrysorhoas."[117] Otherwise, the Hellenistic origins of Gerasa are almost exclusively an "invention" of the second and third century CE, when a host of inscriptions on stones as well as coins proclaimed an impossible "original" foundation of the city by Alexander the Great or by his general Perdikkas. Such a late "Hellenization" is quite typical for most cities of the eastern provinces and goes hand in hand with a deep reconfiguration of their urban space so that it too might look more Hellenic. Such development is evident on the urban map of Gerasa as well, both in the monumentalization of the temples of Zeus Olympios and Artemis dating after the first Jewish war and in the construction of a main north-south thoroughfare (the *cardo*) that fits poorly the earlier location of the main shrine of Zeus. Such a trajectory continued

in the next two centuries with the addition of other ambitious projects and culminated in the construction of the self-standing arch dedicated to Hadrian (after the emperor's visit) and of the ill-conceived hippodrome, which was turned into a cemetery and a quarry already in the third century.[118] In a recent examination of the case of Gerasa and other Syrian cities in the early Roman period, Nathanael Andrade has shown that the development sketched above is common throughout the region (including Galilee as well). Andrade suggests that, instead of chasing the expressions of a nonexistent "stable" identity, scholarly work should focus on performances of Greekness such as those examined above (the "invention" of an origin linked to Alexander or the reconfiguration of urban space). These were the means through which civic communities responded to the establishment of Roman hegemony and strove to rebuild their identities under the label of Syrian Greekness.[119]

These changes did not begin to take place before the middle of the first century, and thus they might be reflected in the Markan narrative only at a very initial stage. However, when one looks both at the preceding period and at the situation underneath the civic performances mentioned above, the entire picture appears to be one of diversity and at times dramatic conflict. This is certainly true for Gerasa, since the city had an ethnically and culturally diverse population well beyond the already-mentioned presence of Jews. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that, despite their less prominent appearance in monumental architecture or on coinage, the Aramaic, Nabatean, and Arab components are significantly attested, for example, in the onomastic of Gerasa.[120] Semitic names occur from a very early date and in connection with significant participation in the performance of civic identity. Thus, the first monumentalization of the temple of Zeus Olympios is carried out by the architect Diodorus, son of Zebedus, in the very first years of the Common Era.[121] In the year 22/23 CE, the priest of the cult of Tiberius, Zabdion, son of Aristomachus, donates one thousand drachmas for the restoration of the temple and for the health of the Augusti and the harmony of the people of Gerasa.[122] It is important to highlight that the occurrences of such Semitic onomastic increase in the following centuries, a phenomenon that has been persuasively linked to the success in involving ethnically Syrian or "Arab" citizens in the workings of the civic administration.[123]

From a more specifically religious point of view and again with reference to the temple of Zeus, Seigne and Gatier have published a very early inscription. It arguably comes from the shrine that existed in the second century BCE and mentions an association τοῦ Διός [τ]οῦ αμμανα ("of the *hammana*-Zeus").[124]

Even though the exact meaning of the epithet *hammana* remains a matter of discussion, this document shows that the cult of Zeus at Gerasa was deeply connected with Semitic institutions from its very beginning, an impression that is confirmed by the significant role that ethnic Syrians played in it over the following centuries. Moreover, the abundant inscriptional materials coming from Gerasa include significant traces of the cult of Semitic deities. One can date a Greek inscription recording an offering of Ameros, son of Ragelos and an ἀρχιβωμιστής "of the holy god Pakeida" (θεοῦ ἁγίου Πακειδᾶ), to the end of the first century.[125] For the second century, one can add a group of four other dedicatory inscriptions to the "Arabian god" (θεὸς Ἀραβικός), a designation that has been interpreted as the prosecution of the cult of Pakeida after Gerasa became part of the newly created province of Arabia in 106 CE.[126] These are just a few pieces of evidence that indicate the persistent and lively presence of non-Greek elements even in the context of the Gerasene civic spaces in which the most explicitly "Greek" identity was performed.[127]

These observations should illustrate how considering Gerasa *tout court* a "Gentile" city could be a dangerous oversimplification from a historical point of view.[128] In any event, the Gerasenes were quite open to very explicit displays of "Greekness," in particular through the structure of their city's administrative institutions and through the organization of their urban landscape. As noted above, such moves are part of a general response of eastern Mediterranean urban centers to the arrival of direct Roman domination. Such a response follows a trajectory that already began around the middle of the first century CE and became more and more evident over the subsequent two hundred years. The narrative of Mk 5 catches the city of Gerasa at the very beginning of such an arc. However, it would be wrong to imagine that this development proceeded without contrasts and in a uniform way throughout the entire East. In fact, almost everywhere in the region the establishment of a civic (and imperial) unity through the performance of Greekness also brought with it the marginalization and sometimes even suppression of other expressions of identity. The case on which we have better information is that of the Jews, due to the specificity of the historical record concerning them (in particular, through the survival of Josephus's works). However, there is little doubt that similar phenomena involved other ethnic groups as well. Moreover, as observed by Andrade in his very rich study of these performances in the Syrian region, the changes took place in cities that already had diverse socio-cultural makeups. Thus, the resulting "Greekness" was colored by specific Syrian traits and by features tied to the unique situations of each city.[129]

In the case of Gerasa this is apparent, for instance, in the survival and even flourishing of the Semitic elements that have been briefly reviewed above. Indeed, the performance of "Greekness" out of sheer necessity implied slippages and contrasts, which in several cases produced violence and even wars. Thus, from an analytical point of view, it is productive to conceptualize even violence as part of the performance. Again, Andrade has very insightfully done so for the civic conflicts that devastated the Syrian cities in the years immediately preceding the Jewish war of 66–70 CE.[130] Such violent contrasts were both means that enabled some groups to construe a specific Syrian Greek identity and performances that recalled those of classic Greek *poleis.* The case of Gerasa is also rather exceptional and very interesting from this point of view. Indeed, Josephus relates that the city was among several other urban centers of the Decapolis that were attacked by the Jews in retaliation for the aggression of the "Syrians" of Caesarea Maritima on the Jewish population of that city. Surprisingly, however, the non-Jewish citizens of Gerasa reacted in a way that appears quite different from the events that transpired elsewhere: it seems—again through the testimony of Josephus—that the Gerasenes did not proceed to massacre the Jews in the city (as happened, for instance, in Scythopolis/Beth Shean, an episode that Josephus describes at length in the *Jewish Antiquities*). In Gerasa, they went to the length of escorting to the borders those Jews who decided to leave the city.[131]

Thus, it may be important to consider how Jesus's exorcism counts as an additional and differently modulated ritual performance, which narratively reflects on and reshapes the changes and conflicts that were transforming the civic identity of Gerasa in the central decades of the first century. First of all, it cannot be denied that violence plays a significant role in Mk 5:1–20, both in the initial description of the demoniac's actions and later when Legion is dramatically expelled and destroyed. It is equally clear that the pericope explicitly and parodically acknowledges how the threat of violence undergirds Roman hegemony and the impact that the latter had on the performance of civic discourse in Gerasa. As maintained by almost all commentators, Jesus comes on the scene as a liberator but also as a powerful conqueror who is strong enough to defeat and expel the Romans.

Nevertheless, such a triumphalist reading—which, for all intents and purposes reverses and ultimately mimics Roman imperial ideology[132]—does not tell us everything about the Gerasene exorcism. As noted above, Daniel Cohen reads the episode as the fantasy of a reversal of Roman imperialism enacted through what can be designated as "Jewish imperialism." But differ-

ent and more convincing interpretations are possible. One has been offered by Garroway, who builds on the seminal observation of Markan ideological ambiguities by authors such as Stephen Moore and Tat-Siong Benny Liew.[133] Garroway proposes to understand Mk 5 in close connection with Jesus's teaching in parables in Mk 4. In particular, the episode of the Gerasene demoniac functions quite well as a narrative illustration of what Jesus had taught in kingdom parables such as that of the sower (4:1–8) and of the mustard seed (vv. 30–32). The final verses of Mk 5:1–20 juxtapose the ideal of a king who succeeds through sheer power with the image of "a single and meager seed who, armed only with the weapon of speech, infiltrates, expands, and flourishes."[134] Likewise, a similar subversion is applied to the identity formation of the Gerasene civic community. Mk 5:1–20 seems to end with a proposal that is fundamentally different from that of "Greekness" conceived as the homogenization brought about by Roman hegemony. The new perspective is signified by the fact that the healed demoniac does not (actually, is forbidden by Jesus to) leave the city to become a "convert" to Judaism. Instead of separation, the pericope advances the possibility of a peaceful coexistence of diverse elements within the civic community of Gerasa.[135]

In this regard, it is intriguing to entertain the possibility that the healed demoniac might be left behind by Jesus as an exorcist for the region. Such an interpretation has the advantage of improving on the cognicentrism and logocentrism that limits Garroway's examination. Indeed, we have seen in the previous chapter that becoming healers after having been possessed is rather the norm. Thus, the anonymous Gerasene might well be envisaged as working with "Legion" as Jesus did with "Beelzebul." After all, the plunge of the pigs into the sea can hardly be imagined to have caused the definitive destruction of the "spirits," particularly if the occurrence is reminiscent of what happened to the giants in the Flood. At the end of the previous chapter, we remarked on the seriousness with which a potential return of an "unclean spirit" is entertained in the early Jesus traditions (Q 11:24–26).[136] In this perspective, we could even rescue the traditional understanding of the Gerasene as the "first missionary to the Gentiles," provided that his "mission" is primarily envisaged as the spreading of a Jewish possession cult in a way not dissimilar from Paul's "mission."

Such an interpretive proposal fits quite well the ethnographical data concerning the cultural "work" accomplished through possession rituals and exorcisms. As Boddy and Kapferer note, the performative efficacy of these rituals consists in the opportunity to "step away"—in particular through comedy

and parody—from cultural and social constructions that would otherwise be naturalized in the practices of everyday life. Such denaturalization opens up a space at the very least for the imagination of new structures and new relationships. In Mk 5:1–20, at issue is not the cultural construction of gender roles as in the Sudanese cases described by Janice Boddy but the performance of ethnic and religious identities. By means of the confrontation with and reflection on foreignness and alterity that are necessarily inherent in the phenomenon, possession invites participants to imagine possibilities other than domination and separation to deal with the Other. While obviously separation and conflict are options that do occur in the richly varied cultural idioms employed to frame spirit possession, several ethnographic accounts describe different articulations. For instance, Shail Mayaram provides a very telling comparison between two cases of possession rituals and exorcisms occurring in rural Rajasthan. On the one hand, one encounters the case of a Hindu woman, Sushila, who serves as the medium for the "spirit" of Pir Baba (a pseudonym for Husayn, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad), and on the other hand, that of a young Muslim man, Nusruddin, who is the medium for the Hindu goddess Bayasaab Mata. Here the two parallel cases powerfully illustrate how divergent ethnic and religious identities can learn to cohabit within the same body. The result is an effective destabilization of the hegemonic discourses that strive to construe a radical separation between Hindu and Muslim identities in northwestern India.[137] As seen above, an analogously hegemonic articulation of opposing identities through separation and conflict was emerging in the Decapolis and neighboring regions in the first century CE. Mk 5:1–20 imagines an alternative solution by relying on the resources inherent in rituals of spirit possession and exorcism.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has tackled the longest and most articulated exorcism narrative in the Gospels, Mk 5:1–20. Mark and the other Gospel traditions inherit from the earliest groups of Jesus followers a conceptualization of the Otherness of the "spirits" rooted in the cultural idioms of Enochic traditions. The identity of these "spirits" as "unclean" is widespread in Second Temple Judaism and indexes the mytheme of the partial survival of the primeval giants, the ill-fated offspring of the union between angels and women. However, Mark combines such a mythological representation with pan-Mediterranean ideas about the return of certain classes of troubled dead, which are well

attested in antiquity. The chapter moves from these initial observations to a more detailed analysis of Mk 5:1–20, in which the foreignness of the possessing "spirit" is further compounded by the insertion of an anti-Roman political theme. By reading the narrative of Mk 5 as a reflection on and refraction of a ritual of exorcism, the chapter shows that an interpretation informed by the insights of anthropological literature can understand the exorcism not simply as an inverted imitation of Roman imperialism but also as a means to reshape imaginatively the local structure of ethnic identities in Gerasa, a locale in which Jewish and Gentile identities had to cohabit in flux and in contrast up to the catastrophic events of the first Jewish war.

The Last Adam Became
a Life-Giving Spirit

CHRIST AND *PNEUMA* IN PAULINE THEOLOGY

The two preceding chapters have analyzed the role played by spirit possession in shaping the subjectivity of exorcists within the early Christ movement and the performative character of an exorcism narrative in the Gospel of Mark. Obviously, it is well known that phenomena that are sometimes judged akin to spirit possession also occur elsewhere in the writings of the early Christ followers, the earliest and historically most important being Paul's letters. These latter texts contain some of the most explicit and influential discussions of spiritual phenomena, but their full scholarly appreciation has often been hindered by theological biases at an even higher degree than in the case of Jesus and the Gospel materials. This and the following chapters should be understood as a development of the seminal insights presented in a scholarly tradition that stretches from Albert Schweitzer and Adolf Deissmann to John Ashton's *The Religion of the Apostle Paul.* In these chapters we will see that Paul's own experience, as it is conveyed in his authentic letters, and that of the Christ groups related to him can be adequately understood as possession by the Christ *pneuma.* This form of possession becomes for Paul and the other Christ followers a source of theological thinking, ethical reasoning, and communal religious life.

Being "in Christ" is the idiom through which Paul expresses the experience of possession by a πνεῦμα, which is identified with the risen Christ and

which, through its presence in them, grants to believers salvation from the eschatological wrath and the expectation of eternal life. For Paul, Christ has achieved the state of existence designated as πνεῦμα through his death and resurrection, an idea that was shared also by other early Christ groups, as is confirmed—even though with some not negligible differences—by an examination of a key section in the *Shepherd* of Hermas.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in Paul not merely for his theological elaborations on classic themes such as justification and christology but also for his views on several socio-cultural issues and on religious experience. The latter trend has produced a few groundbreaking studies focused on spirit possession in the Pauline epistolary such as John Ashton's *The Religion of Paul the Apostle* and Colleen Shantz's *Paul in Ecstasy*.[1] Shantz's book, for instance, establishes in a very solid and convincing way that spirit possession should be a central category in the study of Pauline thought. In this, Shantz as well as Ashton benefited from the recent and powerful resurgence of interest in Paul's "mysticism" in the context of Second Temple Judaism[2], a topic that had apparently gone out of fashion after having dominated Pauline scholarship at the turn of the nineteenth century.[3]

Shantz's approach diverges from that of other scholars in two ways that deserve some more detailed consideration. First, most recent scholarly treatments of Pauline "mysticism," while rightly committed to interpreting the phenomenon in the context of the Second Temple Judaism that was Paul's formative environment, devolve more often than not into collections of textual parallels. Such a move runs the serious danger of reinscribing the cognicentric biases that were the fundamental methodological limitation in the earlier approaches to Pauline "mysticism." Instead, Shantz makes absolutely central the need to look at Paul's experiences as grounded in the body and in materiality. Despite being pursued by Shantz mostly through the application of intellectual resources drawn from neurobiology, this methodological approach complements quite well the intent of the present study to consider spirit possession as a phenomenon that blurs the traditional ontological distinction between mind and body.

Second, another significant limitation for earlier studies of spirit possession in Pauline literature had been the adoption of the very category of

"mysticism." "Mysticism" has had a loaded history within Christianity. Some of the ideological and controversial baggage attached to the label significantly hinders the scholarly appreciation of the role played by spirit possession and similar phenomena within early Christ groups. On the one hand, "mystical" experiences were traditionally identified as the causes behind the development of some deviant or "heterodox" beliefs and practices in these communities. Thus, for instance, the "spiritual" individuals designated as "opponents" of Paul in 1 Corinthians were usually and are still sometimes labeled as "enthusiasts," a term that is charged with clearly negative overtones in New Testament scholarship. On the other hand, even orthodox "mysticism" is sometimes considered an imperfect form of Christian life. It is assumed to be focused primarily on the religious experience of individuals with a consequent loss of attention to the communal and hence ethical dimensions of church life. Thus, the designation of Paul's experiences as "mystical" is still often rejected because—it is thought—it would imply a "subjective" apprehension of events (such as Jesus's resurrection or justification) that must instead be kept "objective" in order to preserve their soteriological value.

In light of such problematic baggage and given that scholars who deal with "mysticism" are still struggling to agree on a shared and viable definition of the phenomenon,[4] it seems more advisable to abandon its use altogether. Shantz, for instance, chooses to replace "mysticism" with "religious experience,"[5] and, in keeping with the already mentioned plan to ground these experiences in the body and in materiality, she shows how neurobiology enables us to understand that Paul talks about "altered states of consciousness." This is a very welcome methodological change of pace, in particular because her focus on terms such as "spirit possession" and "altered states of consciousness" provides the opportunity to study Paul's experiences, not in isolation (as if they were completely unique events in the history of humankind) but in comparison with what has been observed in other cultural and chronological contexts.

I will not delve here into the neurobiology of "altered states of consciousness" (or, better, "trance") because that is not the main approach that has been adopted so far in the book. It is worth mentioning, however, that there is no necessary opposition between the neuroscientific method adopted by Shantz and the more "cultural anthropological" approach deployed here.[6] In fact, Shantz herself at times takes the latter methodological stance in her own book, particularly in the fourth and final chapter. To be sure, even among anthropologists there appears to exist a lively discussion with respect to the most appropriate and fruitful relationship between neuroscientific and more

"culturalist" approaches in the study of possession.[7] However interesting from a theoretical standpoint, such a debate should not hinder us from seeing the significant advantages that can be gained from a collaboration of the two methods in the research on spirit possession in Paul and in his groups.

The work of authors such as Ashton, Shantz, and Christopher Mount show convincingly that the experience of spirit possession constituted the very foundation of Paul's thought and the main impulse for the formation of his groups through the "conversion" of several individuals in various urban centers of Asia Minor and Greece.[8] This cannot surprise, since the preceding chapters have shown that the experience of spirit possession appears to have been foundational already for the earliest followers of Jesus. Paul himself confirms such a hypothesis in his Letter to the Romans, a community that he does not know firsthand and that he has not established. Despite some potential problems in creating a good relationship between the apostle and the Romans, Paul, in trying to make his case in the letter, assumes that the "charismatic" element is as central for his addressees as it is for other groups that were more closely tied to him.[9] The centrality of spirit possession for the life of the Pauline groups is a theme whose importance has been often obfuscated in earlier research by the use of misleading categories (such as "mysticism") or by the need first and foremost to produce a "theology" of Paul (with the attached cognicentric bias).

Thus, attending to the ways in which Paul framed the experience of "altered states of consciousness" in terms of spirit possession as a fundamental building block for communal life is certainly a theme ripe for a new and more methodologically sophisticated examination. Such research is made much easier by the attention that anthropologists and social scientists have devoted in the last few decades to the study of the socio-political significance of spirit possession cross-culturally. In keeping with the stated goals of this book, such a thematic nexus reveals—maybe even more clearly than in other cases—the productive role played by spirit possession in shaping communal structures and the ways in which these are maintained, contested, and negotiated.[10] In the following pages, after a brief terminological introduction, the focus of the treatment will be on two intertwined doctrinal themes: the incorporation of Jesus followers "in Christ" and the identification of the Pauline πνεῦμα with Christ. The next chapter will deal with the more "practical" implications of the doctrinal reflection: the function of spirit possession in Christ groups as a "way of knowing," its deployment as a primary means for the *poiesis* of history, and its role in the construction of a new form of subjectivity.

"IN CHRIST"

Traditionally, one of the most puzzling features of the Pauline language has always been the apostle's proclivity to use the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ ("in Christ") in a significant variety of discursive contexts.[11] On the face of the statistical data, it appears evident that the phrase constitutes a distinctive feature of Paul's lexicon, since it is equally and pervasively distributed over all the letters that can be considered authentic (including, in this case, both Colossians and Ephesians).[12] In turn, the Pastorals seem to contain only the somewhat different formula ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ("in Christ Jesus").[13] Elsewhere in the New Testament, ἐν Χριστῷ occurs only in First Peter (widely judged to be the "most Pauline" among the non-Pauline writings of the earliest Christ movement) and disappears quite rapidly in the second century.[14]

In a preceding chapter we noted the Markan formula stating that possessed individuals are "in an unclean spirit." In it the particle ἐν acquires—a phenomenon typical for the Koine period—a wealth of nuances, to the point that James Moulton labeled it a "maid-of-all-trades." In all likelihood such versatility is the reason why Paul employs the formula ἐν Χριστῷ so often and in such a rich variety of contexts. From a very early date in the critical study of the New Testament, the varied and complex Pauline usage has attracted the attention of scholars, in particular those interested in the theme of "mysticism" in the thought and religious experiences of the apostle.[15]

As noted above, the particle ἐν accompanied by a dative may have an instrumental meaning. That is certainly the case of some among the occurrences of the ἐν Χριστῷ formula in the letters of Paul. James Dunn labels this usage "objective" and maintains that it usually indicates events of soteriological relevance that have taken place through the intervention or the activity of Jesus Christ.[16] For instance, this occurs in discussing in parallel the figures of Adam and Christ with respect to the eschatological resurrection of humans. In 1 Cor 15:22, Paul says that "as in Adam all die, likewise also in Christ all will be made alive" (ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνῄσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζῳοποιηθήσονται). Again, in Gal 3:14 Paul reminds his addressees that Christ has delivered "us" from the curse of the law "so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Christ Jesus" (ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Since Christ is the "lord" *par excellence* in Paul's mind,[17] it cannot be surprising to see that the same pattern of use obtains for ἐν Χριστῷ as well as for ἐν κυρίῳ ("in the lord").

But the main—and arguably original—function of ἐν is locative. Indeed, several of the Pauline occurrences of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ seem to indicate actions that human beings perform or conditions that they experience by being "in Christ." This is true for Paul himself, particularly when he takes on the responsibility of exhorting or reprimanding the addressees of his epistles. Thus, he can write that he speaks "in Christ" (2 Cor 2:17)[18] or that he has sent Timothy to "remind you of my paths in Christ" (1 Cor 4:17).[19] Similar—or even more charged from an emotional standpoint—are those passages in which Paul applies the locative "in Christ" to other Christ followers. Hence, the apostle can again tell the Galatians that all ethnic, gender, and status distinctions are overcome, because "you are all one in Christ Jesus" (famously, in Gal 3:28).[20] Or that the members of the assembly in Corinth are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:2).[21] Sometimes scholars suggest that such use might be treated as the Pauline way to express the meaning conveyed by the label "Christian," which would otherwise be an anachronism for the time of the apostle. To be sure, such a hypothesis could fit some specific passages in which the apostle, for instance, refers to "the assemblies in Judea that are in Christ" (Gal 1:22) or designates Aquila and Prisca as his "coworkers in Christ Jesus" (Rom 16:3). Nevertheless, in the instances mentioned earlier and in several others, it does not seem fitting to think that Paul employed the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase as a convenient label to capture the self-understanding of the early Christ groups. For instance, that hardly seems the case for occurrences such as that of 1 Cor 15:18 (in which the apostle asks rhetorically and provocatively about the fate of those "who fell asleep in Christ") or those in which being "in Christ" is equated to being part of "one body" (as in Rom 12:5). Most scholars agree in calling for an interpretation more mindful of their emotional and affective tone.

The need for a different frame of reference becomes even clearer when one considers how Paul uses interchangeably the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase and other even less cognicentric and more affective expressions. That is the case, for instance, of the image of being "with Christ." As Dunn notes, the latter idea is conveyed less through the occurrence of the phrase σὺν Χριστῷ than by way of the Pauline fondness for complex verbal forms created by prefixing the particle σύν to several different roots.[22] In some long sections (as, for instance, Rom 6:4–8 and 8:16–29) the apostle seems to have artfully constructed a chain of these verbal compounds "to describe the common privilege, experience, and task of believers and to describe a sharing in Christ's death and life."[23] Furthermore, the experience of a group of believers is certainly the

focus of the phrases that indicate a movement εἰς Χριστόν ("into Christ"). This is obviously the case when Paul points out the fact that being baptized has brought about the incorporation within a "body," as in Rom 6:3 ("or don't you know that we, having been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into his death?"[24]) or in 1 Cor 12:13 ("for in one spirit we all have been baptized into one body"[25]). However, the use of the phrase is not limited to cases of baptism, so that the apostle can also write to the Corinthians that God "establishes us with you into Christ" (2 Cor 1:21).[26]

The Pauline use of the phrases reviewed above seem to imply a "move" in or into Christ. This is extremely difficult to account for when "Jesus Christ" is conceived as an individual person in the self-contained and autonomous sense that is typical of western modern conceptions of individuality. New Testament scholars have deployed several strategies to avoid this conclusion, for instance by retracing the terminology of incorporation to ideas arguably more in line with cognicentric paradigms (for instance, by assuming that "being in Christ" simply means "having faith in Christ") or by obfuscating its relevance by taking it as fundamentally metaphoric. Even with the limitations mentioned above, those scholars who have focused their interest on Pauline "mysticism" have opened up more stimulating interpretive avenues. Finally, authors such as Shantz and John Ashton appropriately suggest that the "in Christ" terminology is one among the many instances of the apostle's attempt to find a culturally suitable idiom to express the experience of possession or "ecstasy." Ashton, in particular, reaches this conclusion about Paul's possession at the very end of his seminal book. Unfortunately, it remains unclear what impact this might have had on what he discussed through the rest of the volume.[27] The following pages and chapters should be understood largely as a prosecution of his research.

Indeed, one cannot help noting that the very phrase ἐν Χριστῷ recalls the main way in which the Gospel of Mark repeatedly expresses the possession of a human being by an "unclean spirit" or a demon. As we have noted in previous chapters, the Markan description of a possessed man as being ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (literally "in an unclean spirit") has proved equally puzzling for scholars. However, it is worth entertaining the hypothesis that these Markan and Pauline linguistic eccentricities might actually explain each other. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that the Markan use is by no means restricted to malevolent "spirits." In fact, as observed above, at the very beginning of the second Gospel (Mk 1:8) John the Baptist announces that, after him, one "stronger" than himself will come to baptize the audience "in a holy

spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).[28] In this case the phrase certainly does not have an instrumental meaning. Such a conclusion is supported by a parallelism within the verse itself, since—when John speaks of his baptism—he employs a simple dative to indicate that it is performed "with water" (ὕδατι). Arguably the meaning may be that Jesus—the "stronger" one—will perform his new baptism while possessed by a holy "spirit," which immediately descends "on" or "in" him "as a dove" in Mk 1:10. Otherwise, Jesus's new baptism will introduce his followers "in a holy spirit," a reading that, as we will see, would fit the Pauline use quite well.[29] Later on in the Gospel (Mk 12:35–37,) Jesus responds in Jerusalem to the scribes who doubted his messianic status on the grounds that he was not a descendant of David. To this effect Jesus puts on the mouth of the ancient king of Israel a famously complex quotation from Psalm 110. The quotation is introduced as something that David had said "in the holy spirit" (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ). The phrase underscores that the authoritativeness of the statement depends on the fact that the king had made it while he was possessed by a divine and thus trustworthy "spirit."[30]

Thus, it appears that the "in Christ" formula encountered so often (and without much explanation or elaboration) in the Pauline letters in all likelihood refers to the experience of being possessed by Christ conceived as a "spirit." To what has been observed so far one might add also the analogy between the handful of Pauline references to "having the spirit" (for instance, in Rom 8:9) and the parallel phrasings in the Gospel of Mark.[31] Understanding Christ as a "spirit" obviously conflicts with the imagination that centuries of orthodox doctrine and the modern quest for the historical Jesus have rooted in the minds of contemporary readers. Thus, this key hypothesis will need a more developed discussion in the next sections of this chapter. But before it, it is worth reviewing a few implications that would stem from taking the "in Christ" formula as a reference to the experience of possession.

First, one ought to examine how the "being in Christ" formula fits with the apparently opposite—and less often evoked, but by no means irrelevant—Pauline idea of the indwelling of Christ in the apostle and in other Christ believers. The indwelling can much more easily be reconciled with the traditional understanding of spirit possession and is at the root of some of the most powerful expressions of Paul's connection to Jesus. A famous case is that of Gal 2:20, in which the apostle can affirm that, as a consequence of his having been crucified "with" Christ, he no longer lives, "but Christ lives in me."[32] In 2 Cor 13:5 the idea of indwelling is extended to the Corinthians, who are exhorted to test themselves to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is in them.[33]

Though it may appear so at first, that Christ lives within the believers is not really at odds with their being "in him." This is particularly clear when the articulation of these ideas in Paul's writing is looked at from the vantage point of "spirit" possession. In part the apparent contradiction is overcome by the realization that Paul treats Christ as a "spirit," conceived in the sense that has been sketched already elsewhere in the book: "spirit" as a person and not at all immaterial but not a "person" in the modern sense of the self-contained and autonomous individual self either. A more adequate understanding of "possession" softens the apparent contradiction. As noted above with respect to the very varied ways in which the Gospel of Mark talks of "spirit possession," the diversity of expression is brought about by the fact that the phenomenon of possession is not merely the absolute bracketing of one's individual agency. On the contrary, it is worth recalling how Lambek underscores the virtuous ambiguity that characterizes a phrase such as "spirit possession." The balance between "hosts" and "spirits" (and consequently that between agency and passivity) is continuously in flux and always (re)negotiated. Such a dynamic is all the more evident in those instances of possession—and they are definitely the majority cross-culturally—that are extended in time and repeated in their singular occurrences, as seems to have been the case for the Pauline groups examined here. Thus, the contradiction in Paul's description of the relationship between Christ and his believers is truly contradictory only if possession and the construction of individual personhood attached to it are conceptualized in the terms of the modern western paradigm of the "buffered self."

By the same token, one ought also to reconsider those passages in which Paul deploys the alternative idea that believers belong to Christ. Behind such uses one can certainly read an understanding of "belonging" as "allegiance." This sense was widespread in the political parlance of antiquity and was reinforced by the frequent recourse to slavery metaphors to conceptualize "allegiance."[34] In part this is evidence of the degree to which slavery was something "good to think with" in several different areas of the ancient social thought.[35] But the very mention of slavery as a handy paradigm cannot fail to remind us that—as Paul Christopher Johnson notes—slavery was an institutional and conceptual linchpin for several modern thinkers. For instance, Locke and Hobbes succeeded in enlisting extra-European "spirits" possession among the supporting cast of their projects of subjectification and colonization. Likewise, behind Paul's talk of "belonging to Christ," there lurks something more substantial than "allegiance" or even the rhetorical adoption of slavery imagery. It suffices to look at the example of 1 Cor 15:23, a verse that follows directly

the already-discussed statement that as all have died "in Adam," so all will be made alive "in Christ." In verse 23, Paul goes on to qualify—presumably for the sake of the argument he is developing here with the Corinthians—that each one will come to this resurrection in the appropriate order: first Christ and later, at the moment of his second coming, "those who are of Christ."[36] It is clear that the latter are distinguished and privileged through their "being in Christ" (from v. 22) and ultimately through their having received the "spirit."[37]

CHRIST AS Πνεῦμα

The preceding discussion leads one to tackle the second apparently problematic implication of the understanding of the Pauline idiom of "being in Christ" as a way to speak about "spirit" possession. Indeed, Christ seems largely to operate for Paul as one of the "spirits," akin to those that one has encountered in the preceding chapters. This is true obviously only inasmuch as "spirit" is understood in the terms sketched before, following the work of Michael Lambek, Graham Harvey, and the many other anthropologists who have variously dealt with the phenomenon of spirit possession. That is also the kind of profile that is attributed to the many "spirits" (be they "unclean" or not) encountered in the Gospel traditions. Here it becomes crucial to acknowledge that Paul talks insistently of a πνεῦμα, to the point that one might legitimately note that the apostle appears to be almost "obsessed" with the "spirit," certainly more so than any other early Christian author.

The remarkable feature of Paul's rich discussions of πνεῦμα that should detain our attention here is that the Pauline "spirit" occurs often in the same phrases and images that are also associated with Christ. Thus, while it might not be surprising to see that Paul can talk about the πνεῦμα indwelling Christ believers, it is intriguing to observe that the apostle can equally naturally (if somewhat more sparingly) suggest that the same Christ believers are "in the spirit." In this regard, in a passage that has been mentioned above (2 Cor 1:22), Paul can easily refer to God as the one who has "established us into Christ" (v. 21) and has also "given us the down-payment of the spirit in our hearts."[38] Likewise, in 1 Cor 6:11 the apostle had already stated to the Corinthians that they had been washed, sanctified, and ultimately "justified in the name of the lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God."[39]

Such parallelism of imagery and activity has always attracted the attention of exegetes, in particular because of the dogmatically problematic identity that it seems to create for Christ, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit of

God. One should not be concerned here primarily with the complexities of later Trinitarian debates that would obviously have been an anachronism for either Paul or his fellow Christ believers. Nevertheless, it is worth probing some of the Pauline texts in which the analogy between Christ and a "spirit" is more evident. This will illuminate better the central concern of the present chapter—how the experience of possession shapes the Pauline representation and conceptualization of the person of Christ.

Romans 8:9–11

With respect to this crucial point, the most discussed passage in the Pauline authentic letters, beyond any doubt, is Rom 8:9–11.[40] It occurs in a context where the apostle develops in a most effusive way the motifs that have been discussed so far. Chapter 8 of Romans is regularly identified as one of the places in which Paul's pneumatology is at the forefront of the apostle's thought—the same is true of chapter 6.[41] Following the treatment of the destructive and sinful effects of the law in chapter 7, chapter 8 opens by developing a typically Pauline binary between σάρξ ("flesh") and πνεῦμα, which are respectively associated with "death" and "life." Throughout the entire chapter the life-giving action of the "spirit" is consistently juxtaposed by Paul with the language of "being in Christ." The juxtaposition occurs at key junctures both at the beginning of the section (8:2[42]) and right after the verses that will be considered here (8:15–17).[43] The latter unit, in particular, ought to be identified—following Colleen Shantz—as one of the Pauline passages that most explicitly conveys the immediacy of the experience of possession. There one encounters the heteroglossic invocation of the Aramaic *Abba*[44] and the vivid urgency of the sharing of Christ's fate.[45]

Right in the middle of this development Paul places the verses that are of particular interest for the present discussion (Rom 8:9–11):

9 Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. Εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ. 10 Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην. 11 Εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας ἐκ νεκρῶν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ζῳοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἐνοικοῦν αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα ἐν ὑμῖν.

9 You are not in flesh, but in spirit, if a spirit of God dwells in you. If one does not have a spirit of Christ, that one does not belong to him. 10 But, if Christ is in you, the body is dead for sin, but the spirit is life for[46] righteousness. 11 If the spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will make also your mortal bodies alive because of[47] his spirit that dwells in you.

The first observation that comes to mind when approaching this complex passage is that its somewhat redundant flow confirms a point that has been discussed above. The very first verse (v. 9) shows that—for Paul as for the author of the Gospel of Mark—the idea of "being in a spirit" and that of the "indwelling of a spirit in a human being" are two almost interchangeable ways to describe the phenomenon of spirit possession. Moreover, it cannot be surprising that Paul's discussion of the experience of possession might appear redundant and confusing (possibly nowhere more so than in Rom 8:9–11). This is due not only to the lack of an already developed idiom to talk of such experiences in the Christ groups; perhaps even more important is the fundamental ambiguity that characterizes the relationship between human consciousness and "spiritual hosts" in cases of possession.[48]

There is little doubt that this passage exemplifies, better than any other, how Paul seems to think about the operations of Christ as almost indistinguishable from those of a "spirit."[49] As the "spirit" dwells in the members of the community, likewise Christ is "in them" (and, as a consequence, they belong to him). As the members of the community are "in a spirit," likewise they also "have the spirit of Christ." Incidentally, the pairing of Christ with the "spirit" in this passage shows quite effectively that Paul describes the latter in very *personal* terms. This goes well beyond what could be ascribed to mere metaphorical or rhetorical heightening, an argumentative trope to which the apostle often has recourse in the letters, as in the well-known cases of the personifications of "sin" or "death."[50] As indicated above, this is certainly a common feature throughout chapter 8, and it fits very well the description of the "spirits" that one encounters in cross-cultural instances of spirit possession.

Even though the idea that Christ and πνεῦμα overlap in Rom 8:9–11 logically leads to the conclusion that Paul is treating Christ as a "spirit," it is worth noting that commentators often resist equating the two agents. It is indeed true that the relationship should be understood in slightly more complex terms. First of all, one ought to consider that in verse 9 Paul states that, in

order to belong to Christ, one must possess the πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ ("spirit of Christ"). The connection created through the genitive demands a more nuanced explanation of the relationship between πνεῦμα and Christ than a simple identification. Interpreters routinely make this point, but their solutions are not always satisfactory with respect to the meaning of the passage and the overall structure of Paul's pneumatology. Thus, for instance, one cannot understand the phrase as indicating that the "spirit" simply "belongs" to Christ.[51] In fact, Paul says immediately in the following verse 11 that this "spirit" is the spirit "of the one who raised Christ from the dead." The reference is certainly to God and this second genitive is in all likelihood an indicator of belonging. Unless one wants to push for an absolute identification of God and Christ that seems frankly not possible for Paul, one must conclude that the πνεῦμα under discussion belongs to God and thus must have another type of relationship with Christ. As we will see in greater detail when we turn to 1 Cor 15:45, Paul himself gives a clue for solving this problem when he insists in verse 11 that God has raised Jesus from the dead. Most commentators agree that, while Paul did not mean that the πνεῦμα was the agent or even an instrument in Jesus's resurrection, such an insistence signals a specific connection between the operation of the πνεῦμα and Jesus's death and resurrection.[52] This cannot be surprising for any reader of Paul inasmuch as the apostle consistently posits the Christ-event as the crucial element of both his theological thinking and of his religious experience. In the case of Rom 8:9–11 Christ's death and resurrection are the events that created the connection that Paul expresses by means of the phrase πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ. The latter does not mean either that the πνεῦμα belongs to Jesus or that the πνεῦμα effectuated Jesus's resurrection. Instead, through those events and those experiences Jesus Christ became a "spirit" that is identified now with the designation πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ.

Indeed, when we look more closely at the thrust of the argument developed by Paul in verses 9–11, it appears quite evident that they function as a sort of digression within the flow of the first sub-unit of the chapter (vv. 8:1–17). The apostle interrupts an argument that revolves around the opposition between "being in flesh" and "being in spirit" to resume it almost immediately after our passage, in verses 12–13.[53] Obviously, the digression is not at all an idle one but serves the purpose of instructing the addressees on the right kind of "spirit" that must possess the Christ believers in order for them to avoid death and obtain life. For Paul, as we have seen above, the experience of possession constitutes the very fundament of religious life. Thus, he knows very

well that "spirits" exist in several different varieties and that human beings can be possessed by any one of them. Also elsewhere the apostle can assume as a shared belief interwoven in the flow of a rhetorical argument that "demons" or "evil spirits" *really* exist and that humans can unwittingly enter into their service if they are not careful about their behavior.[54] Guy Williams illustrates quite well how deeply embedded angelology and demonology are in the very thinking of Paul (and how theologically biased the modern critical attempts to portray the apostle as a "demythologizer" in this respect have been).[55] To this, Williams adds the appropriate observation that, despite the relevant role played by apocalypticism in Paul's overall conceptions of the world, "spirits" remain often (or even in principle) morally ambiguous agents for him. Thus, discernment is what Paul is trying to teach in Rom 8:9–11. Having established that "being in spirit" is a goal for which one must strive, it behooves the apostle to indicate more specifically what "spirit" should actually be pursued. Obviously, Paul tells his addressees that it should be a "divine spirit" (πνεῦμα θεοῦ) and, more precisely, the "spirit" that is indicated or designates itself as "of Christ."

For Paul, the decisive signal that the πνεῦμα that should possess Christ believers is indeed "Christ" is obviously the connection between this "spirit" and Jesus's death and resurrection. As a consequence of those massively important events Jesus has become a "spirit" who can now be experienced by all Christ believers through possession. From a cross-cultural perspective, that a human being can become a "spirit" and later possess other humans is a rather normal occurrence in possession cults throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Often the identities of these "spirits" are rather stereotyped (or mythical) foreigners (as in the cases of the *zar* or *hauka* cults described in the preceding chapter), but they never lack *personal* and human traits. Moreover, in some cases, as in that of the *tromba* cults studied by Michael Lambek, the "spirits" are actual historical figures who return after death to possess specific mediums.[56]

The hypothesis of an identification between Christ and πνεῦμα had already been advanced—mostly on the basis of Rom 8:9–11—by the earliest scholars who attended to Paul's "mysticism." For instance, Adolf Deissmann in his seminal analysis of the "in Christ" formula in the Pauline epistolary had already reached such a conclusion. But he moved from linguistic and exegetical considerations to suggest that Paul's conceptualization of Christ as πνεῦμα implied a complete devaluation or indifference on the part of the

apostle toward the historical Jesus.[57] In light of what has been just said with respect to the personality of the "spirits" encountered cross-culturally in cases of possession, Deissmann's conclusion cannot be accepted. A careful exegesis of passages such as Rom 8:9–11 helps here. Already James Dunn makes similar observations with respect to the close relationship between the Christ πνεῦμα present in the members of the Pauline groups and the "historical Jesus" (at least as far as his death and resurrection are concerned).[58] However, Dunn himself finds it problematic to assess correctly the relationship between Jesus's personhood and the "personality" of the πνεῦμα in this context.[59] It is probably impossible to grasp adequately the meaning of such experiences on a cognitive level, but the struggles of Dunn and others are in large part generated by their insistence on treating the phenomenon of possession in the early Christ groups without deploying appropriate cross-cultural comparisons.[60] The issue of the "personality" and of the historical "background" of possessing "spirits" appears repeatedly in the ethnographic record. Thus, they can strengthen the conclusion that Paul's conceptualization of Christ as a πνεῦμα should not be taken as inconsistent at all with the maintenance of his personhood and of a close connection with (at least some) key events in the life of the historical Jesus.[61]

In this regard, one should also revisit the criticisms that are sometimes addressed to Dunn's thesis that the πνεῦμα was the only form in which Christ believers experienced Christ. On this basis, Dunn determines the impossibility to distinguish—at an experiential level—Christ from the πνεῦμα. A good example of the shortcomings inherent in the objections to Dunn is apparent in Peter Orr's recent (and otherwise very interesting) treatment of Christ's absence and presence in the early Christ groups. Orr argues against Dunn that, by taking the latter's position on the experience of Christ as a πνεῦμα, we miss that Paul clearly envisages the experience of Christ as *absence* alongside that of Christ's pneumatic indwelling (or *presence*) in the believers.[62] Undoubtedly, Orr can point to passages in which Paul describes the effects and affects caused on and in him by Christ's absence in terms that are experientially as poignant as those described above with reference to being "in Christ."[63] Even within Romans 8—the chapter that has been discussed so far—there is indeed a verse (8:34) in which Paul stresses quite pointedly that Christ is not with the believers. Instead, after his resurrection Christ is in heaven where he can intercede on their behalf.[64] According to Orr, a consistent reading of Romans 8 would have to conclude that Christ and πνεῦμα must remain distinct,

even from an experiential point of view (with the additional result that Jesus Christ would maintain his "human nature").

Orr's observation is very important, but it is only troubling for Dunn's thesis of the experience of Christ as a πνεῦμα insofar as Dunn does not conceive of Christ as a "spirit" in terms of spirit possession. In fact, Michael Lambek as well as several other anthropologists have pointed out that, far from being problematic for possession cults, a dialectic between presence and absence is fundamental for the phenomenon itself and even constitutive of the "truth" of the experience. The "reality" of the "spirits" is extremely difficult to assess appropriately with only the critical tools of western modern ontologies. However, even by employing categories drawn from Heidegger's metaphysics, Lambek in particular has shown that when "truth" is conceptualized as "unconcealment," then "spirits" cannot but be "true" exactly because of their constitutive coming out of "concealment" in the event of possession.[65] Again, far from being an indication that Paul (and his fellow Christ believers) did not conceive of Christ as a πνεῦμα, that Christ is at times experienced as *present* and at times as *absent* is what constitutes the experience of Christ's "reality" as a "spirit." The embodiment of "spirits" in possession is often repeated but also always intermittent, a state of affairs that explains quite well why Paul can talk in equally impassioned terms about the presence of Christ in him and about his longing to be more fully with him.

1 Corinthians 15:45

Thus, Paul conceives of Christ as a "spirit," and its "transformation" is thought to have occurred in connection with Jesus's resurrection. Such an idea is most clearly expressed in 1 Cor 15:45, a verse that closes the key section of a particularly long and complex discussion on the "type" of body that will come out of the final resurrection (1 Cor 15:42–45):

42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. Σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. 43 Σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει. 44 Σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. 45 Οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν· ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν.

42 Likewise also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruptibility. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown as a natural body, it is raised as a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one. 45 Likewise it is also written: the first human Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

The passage at hand continues a section of chapter 15 whose rhetorical flow is not easy to disentangle. At least we can say that here Paul is building both on the assumed existence of several different "types" of bodies in the cosmos and on an analogy with sowing, a process through which one particular bodily "type" is transformed into another. The rhetorical thrust of the entire chapter should not detain us here, but for the observation that verse 45 constitutes a key moment in Paul's argument in favor of the "reality" of the resurrection. As several scholars have noted, the point that the apostle argues is not simply that Jesus has been raised and his body transformed into a σῶμα πνευματικόν ("spiritual body").[66] Verse 45 adds something to that basic assumption by stating that, through the transformation that took place at Jesus's resurrection, he, the "last Adam,"[67] has also become a "life-giving spirit" (πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν).

The addition is significant inasmuch as it neatly breaks the parallelism between the "first" Adam, who was merely a "living being," and the "last" one. However, most scholars agree that the designation "life-giving spirit" should not be taken to mean that the Christ/πνεῦμα is now the agent or even an instrument of the eschatological resurrection. The latter would indeed be an unparalleled idea within the Pauline corpus. Dunn is probably right when he points out that Paul's reasoning at this point is far from developing a cognicentric argumentative line. The apostle relies heavily on both his own and the Corinthians' embodied experience of Christ as πνεῦμα functioning as a guarantee of the future resurrection as well as of its bodily nature.[68] Such a theme resurfaces repeatedly in the apostle's writings. Usually it is conveyed through a host of images that have become a well-known shorthand to express the Pauline idiom of the relationship between "spirit" and human beings. That is the case for the designations of the πνεῦμα as "down-payment" (ἀρραβών) in 2 Cor 1:21 and 5:5 or as "first fruit" (ἀπαρχή) in Rom 8:23. Appropriately, Dunn notes that Paul's argumentative line in 1 Cor 15 continues in the same vein by telling his addressees that, "as we carried the likeness of the earthly human being, so we will also carry that of the heavenly one."[69] Thus, Paul

is pointing out for the benefit of the Corinthians their very experience of possession on the part of the πνεῦμα, which is Christ. Such a phenomenon confirms—far better and far more strongly than any other rhetorical proof or intellectual demonstration—that they too are on their way to becoming incorruptible "spiritual bodies," as it has been the case for the Jesus Christ that they are now "hosting" in their own bodies.

It bears mentioning here that 1 Cor 15 has become an increasingly attractive focus of scholarly attention in recent years as the Pauline conception of the body has gained traction as maybe the most debated topic in the exegesis of the apostle's writings.[70] The most controversial proposal advanced in the last decade is certainly that of Troels Engberg-Pedersen. This scholar has endeavored to read the σῶμα πνευματικόν (and actually the entirety of 1 Cor 15) in terms of a Stoic-like cosmology that he suggests would have profoundly informed all of Paul's thought.[71] There are several elements in Engberg-Pedersen's understanding of Paul that lead him to take positions very close to those discussed in the present book, for instance in regard to the apostle's conceptions of moral agency and subjectivity. These themes will be taken up again in due course, but in the specific case of 1 Cor 15 an obvious strength of Engberg-Pedersen's interpretation is his insistence on the materiality of the Pauline πνεῦμα. This is an idea shared cross-culturally in most instances of spirit possession: indeed—as has been noted above—it stands behind the choice to write "spirit" instead of spirit throughout these chapters. To note such significant similarities invites us to discuss the merits of Engberg-Pedersen's proposals with respect to what constitutes the central assumption of the present chapter: that the groups' experience of spirit possession largely fuels Paul's thoughts and communal instructions. Posing such questions is all the more relevant inasmuch as Engberg-Pedersen does not seem to give any space in his reconstruction to the phenomenon of possession despite the remarkable similarities noted above.

The following considerations should not at all be taken as a rejection of Engberg-Pedersen's achievements obtained by way of his consistent and sustained Stoic reading of Paul. In fact, Engberg-Pedersen's interpretation contributes in powerful and highly beneficial ways to the current debates in Pauline studies. In particular, he can convincingly show how unnecessary and harmful are interpretations that pit Jewish traditions against Greek philosophical doctrines, as if an intellectual figure of Paul's stature could not have drawn from both.[72] In this regard, the following remarks should not be taken as an endorsement of any genealogical arguments. It seems not very

useful to try to ascertain whether the "origins" of Paul's thought came either from the Jewish or the Greco-Roman side with the ultimate aim of establishing or undermining its normative authority.

On the contrary, Engberg-Pedersen's provocative proposals provide a more than appropriate opportunity to test a point that has been made at the very beginning of the present chapter following Shantz's methodological reflections. It appears that in the analysis of Paul's works a persistent problem is the privileging of cognicentric categories and assumptions over the lived experiences of Paul himself and of his fellow Christ believers. Interestingly enough, Engberg-Pedersen is keenly aware of this very problem. Indeed, he explicitly understands his own focus on the influence on Paul of the Stoic idea of a "material spirit" as a means to avoid cognicentrism. However, we might legitimately wonder whether this is truly an effective way to address the problem at hand. First of all, if we assume with Engberg-Pedersen that the entire argument of 1 Cor 15 is underpinned by Stoic cosmological notions, it becomes hard to explain how this very argumentative line might have worked effectively with the Corinthians. For in all likelihood not many of them were steeped in the subtleties of Stoic doctrines to the degree needed to follow Paul's reasoning.[73] But even this point might be more muddled than Engberg-Pedersen would have us believe. Several scholars have noted that the thought deployed by Paul in 1 Cor 15 matches Stoic cosmological doctrines only to a certain extent. Indeed, Engberg-Pedersen must put together Paul's doctrines from a veritable patchwork of ancient Stoic texts, with the entire construction not holding up perfectly at certain key points.[74] Again, such critical observations should not lead to the extreme conclusion that Engberg-Pedersen is wrong and that there are actually no Stoic elements in Paul's thinking. On the contrary, it seems that—despite his best efforts—even Engberg-Pedersen has given too much prominence to cognicentric elements in his analysis of the apostle's writings. In all likelihood a better approach to the issue would be to start from the powerful experience of possession on the part of the risen Christ as a πνεῦμα (felt by Paul himself and by the other Christ believers). Thus, the apostle's recourse to Stoic ideas can be understood as an important instance of what Shantz calls "confabulation," the recourse to a shared cultural idiom in order to give expression and intelligibility to the experience of possession.[75] On these grounds, one might explain Paul's lack of Stoic doctrinal "orthodoxy" as the necessary slippage between experience and its confabulation. At the same time, however, such an explanation can also indicate why Stoic ideas might have proven so appealing to the apostle. Indeed, their

resemblance to the experience of possession in crucial matters such as the materiality of the "spirit" or the definition of subjectivity might have rendered them particularly apt for the special kind of confabulation needed by Paul.

Romans 1:3–4

One last Pauline text in which the identification between Christ and the πνεῦμα is clearly expressed and theologically developed by the apostle is the much-discussed Rom 1:3–4:

> 3 Περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, 4 τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.
>
> [The good news of God] 3 concerning his son, generated from the seed of David with respect to the flesh, 4 constituted son of God in power with respect to the spirit of sanctification from the resurrection of the dead.

These two short verses contain unique phrases whose interpretation has been the source of significant scholarly debates. Along with the assumption that Rom 1:3–4 may contain a pre-Pauline core (and that the latter may be reconstructed with the application of the right type of redactional criticism), such a state of affairs has produced a situation in which, as Martin Hengel noted long ago, this small section is one of the most discussed New Testament passages.

In light of this state of affairs, the present treatment will be limited to the examination of Rom 1:3–4 insofar as it pertains to the issue of the relationship between Christ and πνεῦμα in Paul's thought. It will be assumed that the members of the Roman group to whom he is writing shared at the very least the gist of what Paul is saying here.[76] Two issues must be mentioned at the outset before we tackle the central question of the identity and role of the πνεῦμα. Significant debates have developed in the past with regard to the right understanding of the verb ὁρίζω at the beginning of verse 4. Such uncertainty is reflected in the majority of current translations, which diverge in rendering the participle to mean either external perception ("manifested," "revealed," or even "declared") or objective establishment ("constituted," "appointed," or "ordained"). The first option appears more agreeable in terms

of the further development of christological doctrines (and possibly even of Paul's own thoughts, as we will see). When in later centuries it became axiomatic that Christ had been the Son of God from eternity, the change that occurred at the resurrection could only be understood as an official revelation to the cosmos. However, it is clear from a careful lexical analysis of ὁρίζω that the first meaning mentioned above is actually unattested in Greek literature up to the later Christian writers. In turn, these authors are likely to have fabricated it in the interest of reading Paul's statement in agreement with the above-mentioned christological orthodoxy.[77] Thus, it appears that what Paul envisages here is the "establishment" of Christ as Son of God in the sense of a political appointment that—in the case at hand—entails universal lordship and sovereignty.[78]

A second issue connected with the one just discussed is to establish when and in consequence of what events such "appointment" as Son of God took place. Paul's formulation indicates a temporal determination by way of the phrase ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν (literally "from a resurrection of the dead"). Again, some translations make explicit that one should understand these words as a reference to Jesus's own resurrection by adding "his." But this is clearly an over-interpretation fueled by the fear that, were Jesus's divine sonship tied to the general resurrection of all humans and since the latter has not yet been realized, one could argue that Christ might not yet be the Son of God after all. Indeed, the phrase ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν is very ambiguous. It appears that, if Paul had meant to refer to Jesus's specific resurrection, he should have said more clearly that this was "from the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν), an expression that the apostle also uses elsewhere in his letters. On the other hand, some scholars observe that having two particles ἐκ in such a short space would have sounded quite awkward and that the variation may thus be due to simpler stylistic reasons. The issue is complex, but it is possible to argue that casting the entire discussion as a choice between *two* resurrections may be a misunderstanding of Paul's thought and another instance of later doctrinal developments projected backward onto the apostle's mind. In all likelihood, Paul understood Jesus's resurrection as an integral part of the general resurrection that was going to follow at the end-time. This is a very important piece of the argument deployed by the apostle in 1 Cor 15 (in particular with reference to Jesus's designation as the "first fruit" in 15:20 and 15:23). Traditions such as the one preserved in Mt 27:52–53 (about the resurrection of some dead at the moment of Jesus's death on the cross) indicate that the idea was present among early Christ groups beyond Paul specifically.[79] Thus, it is still safe to

consider the mention of "resurrection of the dead" in verse 4 as a reference to Jesus's resurrection. At the same time, it is worth keeping in mind that Paul does not separate it conceptually from the general resurrection (and that such a conclusion has obvious implications for our understanding of the role played by πνεῦμα in the same verse).

Assessing the role attributed to πνεῦμα in Rom 1:3–4 is the most relevant issue for the present purpose. On this point too, a few complex exegetical choices must be made at the outset. First of all, it is important to establish that to read the mention of πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης as a reference to the "Holy Spirit" or the κατὰ σάρκα/κατὰ πνεῦμα binary as an indication that Paul was already thinking about the two "natures" (human and divine) of Jesus Christ are anachronistic moves. It also bears saying that the above-mentioned binary should not be taken as signifying a stark opposition in which the "flesh" constitutes the negative pole with a consequent devaluation of Jesus's Jewish humanity.[80] Thus, the phrase κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης is certainly associated with κατὰ σάρκα in a literary structure that one can describe as parallelism. But the two parallel members are not quite equivalent and antithetical to each other, most of all because of the addition of ἁγιωσύνη ("holiness," "sanctity"), which qualifies the "spirit" in a way that will be analyzed more closely shortly.[81] The existence of this parallelism shows that the function of the preposition κατά here cannot be instrumental, as is sometimes suggested (as if Christ had been appointed Son of God "through" or even "by" a spirit of holiness). As Andries du Toit argues convincingly,[82] κατά must be modal here in both cases, because attributing an instrumental or agentive role to the "flesh" in verse 3 would not make any sense.[83] Thus, the move from verse 3 to 4 expresses a move from Christ's messianic status "according to the flesh" to Christ's new appointment "according to a spirit of holiness." The implication is that Christ is transferred from a "fleshly" mode of existence to a "spiritual" one. Hence, the parallelism between verses 3 and 4 is aptly designated as "progressive," in the sense that it indicates a temporal trajectory whose central chronological moment (as we have seen above) is Jesus's resurrection.

It is worth asking then what relationship between Christ and the πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης is envisaged here. Dunn and du Toit rightly indicate a connection between Rom 1:3–4 and 1 Cor 15:45, concluding that in his new mode of existence—following the resurrection—Christ has become a πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν and has taken on a σῶμα πνευματικόν.[84] The qualification of the "spirit" as being "of holiness" clarifies the relationship between this πνεῦμα and God, helping in the above-mentioned task of discerning the "spirits." Again as in

1 Cor 15, the believers' experience of being possessed by this πνεῦμα gives them the concrete "down payment" of eternal life. Thus, Paul can both say that all those beloved of God who are in Rome are called ἅγιοι ("holy ones" in Rom 1:7) and can conclude the letter with the prayer that God might fill them with "the power of the holy spirit" (Rom 15:13).[85] As for the other cases reviewed above, such an articulation raises the problem for traditional exegesis of distinguishing whether at issue here is the "Holy Spirit" or the human "spirit" of the individual believers. Du Toit's hesitancy is worth quoting at length because his observations are otherwise so clear and appropriate:[86]

> In this regard it is illuminating to note that in some Pauline passages it is quite impossible to decide whether the word πνεῦμα refers to the spirit of believers or to the Holy Spirit influencing the πνεῦμα of believers, the latter being the spiritual and controlling centre of their new life in Christ. The Spirit and the human spirit certainly do not become one in a mystic sense, neither does the human spirit become deified; but the union is so close that πνεῦμα can refer to both of them at the same time. What is true of the Spirit, is also true of the spirit of the Christian [*sic!*].

In light of what has been illustrated repeatedly in the preceding pages, it is easier to see that du Toit's difficulties in dealing with this key interpretive problem are actually caused by his lack of consideration for the fact that Paul's thinking on these subjects is grounded in the experience of spirit possession. Du Toit gets closer than many others to this point in recognizing the fundamental union that Paul presupposes between divine and human πνεῦμα. But his use of the unhelpful category of "mysticism" renders the problem intractable for him. It is clear in this case that the Pauline reasoning on the links connecting Christ, πνεῦμα, and humans is fully understandable only if looked at through the phenomenon of spirit possession with its notion of multiple personalities within the same being and with its relativization of the indivisibility of the self.

THE FIFTH SIMILITUDE IN HERMAS'S SHEPHERD

As James Dunn notes, the christology of Rom 1:3–4 is thus articulated in two chronological stages, with Christ being at first the Davidic Messiah and then, after his resurrection, a "spirit" appointed as the Son of God.[87] Traditional scholarly discussions concerning these two verses have faulted this

two-stages interpretation because it would end up attributing to Paul a form of "adoptionism." Even though "adoptionism" is a modern scholarly creation (which, as such, tells us more about contemporary theological debates than about ancient doctrines) and there would be nothing wrong in concluding that Paul was indeed an "adoptionist," there are more than christological uncertainties in Rom 1:3–4. In fact, it is quite clear (from this very passage and from other references throughout the Pauline epistolary) that the "Son of God" preexisted the first stage of Jesus's messiahship. Thus, with Dunn, it is more appropriate to describe the entire structure of verses 3–4 as a three-stage christology.[88] But then obviously one is led to ask what it means that Jesus Christ is "appointed" Son of God after his resurrection. Should we go back to the understanding of ὁρίζω there as "declared," which however is impossible from a lexicographical point of view, as we have seen? And, more importantly for the theme discussed here, what is the relationship that Paul presupposes between this "Son of God" and the πνεῦμα?

Answers to these questions can only be partial and speculative, in large measure because Paul was in all likelihood trying to find the most adequate idiom to express all the cognitive and moral implications that he and his fellow believers could draw from the experience of being possessed by Christ. Thus, it is no surprise that Paul's statements are not always perfectly balanced or perfectly self-consistent (even without accounting for the often untrustworthy and too convenient solutions offered by redaction criticism). However, I suggest that there is another early Christ text that can shed some light on what is so densely and opaquely articulated by the apostle in Rom 1:3–4.

The *Shepherd* of Hermas is a second-century composite text that—in the form that is printed in modern editions and is for the most part extant in ancient manuscripts—is clearly the result of the accumulation of disparate materials. The Muratorian fragment (an incomplete summary of the New Testament canon extant in a Latin translation that is usually dated to the end of the second century CE) mentions the *Shepherd* and places its composition in Rome. The same document identifies Hermas as the brother of the Roman bishop Pius I, who is traditionally reported to have held the office between 140 and 155 CE. The reliability of the Muratorian fragment in general and on this point in particular is the subject of significant debate, in large part fueled by the fact that the *Shepherd* itself does not refer to any Pius and—even more troubling—does not seem to know that the Roman Christ groups are under the authority of a bishop.[89] The textual transmission of the *Shepherd* is also a highly problematic affair. Despite having been one of the most successful and

widely read early Christian books of the pre-Constantinian era, the *Shepherd* did not make the canon of the New Testament, so its rich textual attestation stops abruptly in the fifth century. Moreover, because of its exclusion from the canon, but also because of its popularity and the heterogeneous genres of the materials included in it, the *Shepherd* is attested in several divergent forms. Thus, even if one were to trust the information conveyed by the Muratorian fragment, it is still quite possible that some of the materials included in the *Shepherd* around the middle of the second century CE were indeed put into writing at least a few decades earlier.[90] The traditional scholarly approach that sharply distinguished the study of New Testament texts from that of Hermas's work (included in the artificial collection of the "Apostolic Fathers" and hence deemed a mere instance of the "reception" of the New Testament[91]) becomes untenable.[92] This rather long introduction to the *Shepherd* is required, since Hermas's writing is—together with Paul's key chapters in 1 Cor 12–14—one of the most diffuse and detailed sources of information on spirit possession in the early Christ groups. Hermas's relationship with the Pauline letters is a matter of lively discussion that can be addressed here only in a most cursory fashion. That some kind of relationship existed is undeniable, since the *Shepherd* clearly employs lexical and theological elements that (as we will see) are reminiscent of the apostle. However, as we have seen, traditional scholarship on Hermas's writing has moved on from the untenable assumption that the *Shepherd* ought to be treated only as an instance of "reception" of the New Testament. In several cases, such an approach has taken the concrete path of understanding Hermas as a "Jewish-Christian" author. Thus, the *Shepherd* has in principle been opposed to a Paul envisaged as the perfect representative of "Gentile-Christianity."[93] To treat the history of the early Christ groups in such binary and essentializing fashion is problematic in ways that cannot be fully illustrated here. The issue is crucial as far as Paul's and Hermas's stances on spirit possession are concerned. Indeed, when these texts are taken to represent two essentially opposed camps, one risks losing sight of the many elements that are shared between them and of the rich dialogue through which they construct their respective positions. A brief examination of pneumatic christology in the *Shepherd* offers a good opportunity to look at some shared constitutive elements.

The materials included in Hermas's work are subdivided into three macro-units that differ markedly in their generic character. The overall frame of the *Shepherd* is that of a revelation conveyed to Hermas himself by a series of superhuman revealers. However, one can safely say that the only truly apoca-

lyptic sub-unit within the writing is the first, which includes five sections that are appropriately designated as *Visiones.* Two other sub-units follow these, including respectively twelve *Mandata* (which are usually direct instructions addressing moral and ethical issues) and ten *Similitudines.* The traditional designation of the last sub-unit, *Similitudines,* comes from the Latin translation of the original Greek title παραβολαί. As such, each of the ten sections contains the description of a "parable" (or, following the Latin, "simile"). These are akin to those attributed to Jesus in the Gospel traditions, and Hermas "sees" them in various states of altered consciousness. A major difference between the Gospel parables and those encountered in the *Shepherd* is that the latter receive an (at times very heavy-handed) allegorical interpretation from an angelic being (the "Shepherd" of the title), who is thus cast as the *angelus interpres* required by the apocalyptic genre.

The focus of the present discussion will be the fifth *Similitudo* of Hermas, which approaches christological themes in Hermas's characteristically unsystematic way. Thus, scholarly debates have raged around this section probably more than around any other part of the *Shepherd.* A short summary of the contents is in order. The section begins with Hermas fasting on a mountain (a typical setting for the experience of trance in early Christian texts)[94] and receiving a manifestation of the Shepherd, who instructs him on the right way to fast. In order to teach Hermas better, the Shepherd tells him a "parable" that is particularly reminiscent of other similar pieces encountered in the Gospels on the mouth of Jesus. The main character of the short story is the owner of a vineyard who entrusts the care of his field to his most faithful slave. The latter completes the assigned work (the construction of a fence) and then goes beyond the original orders by weeding the entire vineyard. When the master comes back, he is greatly pleased and praises the slave in the presence of "his beloved son" (ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ ἀγαπητός, who is also the heir) and of his friends, who are his "advisors" (σύμβουλοι).[95] As a result of the slave's superlative work, the master decides that, besides the original reward of freedom that he had promised to the slave in exchange for the construction of the fence, he is going to recompense him for his additional "good work" (ἔργον καλόν) by making him "fellow heir" (συγκληρονόμος) with his own son.

The Shepherd then goes on to explain in a detailed way to Hermas the meaning of the brief parable (narrated in 5,2). The first explanation (in 5,3) is most directly related to the ethical concerns of the overall unit as it addresses the issue of a correct form of fast. Thus, the Shepherd illustrates that if one performs "something good beyond the commandment of God" (τι ἀγαθοῦ

ἐκτὸς τῆς ἐντολῆς τοῦ θεοῦ), one will be rewarded with more glory and joy than what is expected for the simple obedience to the minimal command-ments. Accordingly, a more acceptable type of fast would entail keeping track of the money saved on food and giving an equal amount to widows, orphans, or others who might be in need.

Hermas asks insistently for an even deeper explanation and, after some banter, the Shepherd gives him an exposition (in 5,5) that has a more allegori-cal and christological tone. In this new interpretation, the field is the world, the master of the vineyard is the creator, the son is the holy spirit, and the slave is the son of God (ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ δοῦλος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν). In turn, the vines are the people of God and the weeds taken out by the slave are their "unlawful actions" (ἀνομίαι).

There are some more discussions between the Shepherd and Hermas con-cerning the status and the tasks entrusted to the "son of God." Then the speaker seems to transition into a third interpretation that is somewhat dif-ferent from the preceding one and that is worth quoting more extensively (5,6,4b–7):

> 4b But listen to what it means that the Lord took his Son, along with the glorious angels, as a counselor about the slave's inheritance. 5 God made the holy spirit, which preexisted and created all things, dwell in the flesh that he desired [τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ προόν, τὸ κτίσαν πᾶσαν τὴν κτίσιν, κατῴκισεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς σάρκα ἣν ἠβούλετο]. This flesh, then, in which the holy spirit dwelled, served well as the spirit's slave [ἐδούλευσε τῷ πνεύματι καλῶς], for it conducted itself in rev-erence and purity, not defiling the spirit at all. 6 Since it lived in a good and pure way, cooperating with the spirit and working with it in everything it did, behaving in a strong and manly way, God chose it to be a partner with the holy spirit [μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου εἵλατο κοινωνόν]. For the conduct of this flesh was pleasing, because it was not defiled on earth while bearing the holy spirit. 7 Thus he took his Son and the glorious angels as counselors, so that this flesh, which served blamelessly as the spirit's slave, might have a place of residence and not appear to have lost the reward for serving as a slave. For all flesh in which the holy spirit has dwelled—and which has been found undefiled and spotless—will receive a reward.

This is almost unanimously considered the most difficult passage in the en-tire *Shepherd.* While there are certainly several issues that deserve a mention

here, the present examination will be limited to the most critical problem and to the impact that its clarification might have on the understanding of Rom 1:3–4. From the summary of the first allegorical interpretation of the parable given in *Similitudines* 5,5 we have seen that the Shepherd equates the "holy spirit" with the son of the master and the "son of God" with the slave in charge of the vineyard. However, it seems that from 5,6,4b on—the passage quoted above—things are changing and that now the "holy spirit" is actually the "son of God," while Jesus Christ (now identified as the "flesh") has lost that qualification. Is there a contradiction? How can Hermas's christology be described in a coherent way?

These questions have come up in the scholarship on the *Shepherd* almost from its beginning. Recently Bogdan Bucur has reexamined them with great care as part of his important inquiry into the role of "angelomorphic pneumatology" in early Christian texts.[96] Bucur makes several preliminary points that are certainly valuable for the present treatment even beyond the issues concerning the *Shepherd* specifically. Thus, Bucur notes in particular that Hermas treats the "son of God" as a "spirit" in keeping with a use that is widespread in all early Christian circles when one needs to describe "heavenly entities."[97] In light of Paul's descriptions of the "son of God" and of the risen Christ, it seems reasonable to include the apostle in the number of those who had recourse to the "spirit" idiom for the same purposes. Moreover, Bucur points out that the *Shepherd* continues the Second Temple Jewish tradition of representing these "spirits" as "angels."[98] Bucur takes such "angelomorphic" representation to mean not that "spirits" have the outward appearance of angels (whatever that may be). More appropriately, these "spiritual beings" have all the features of personhood as the latter is usually ascribed to human beings.[99] This is of obvious significance for the present inquiry, since a fundamental characteristic of spirit possession cross-culturally is indeed that the involved "spirits" have as much personality as their "hosts."

Despite these fundamental strengths, Bucur's reading of Hermas's *Similitudines* 5 is not convincing in the solution that he advances for the apparent christological inconsistency. Bucur rightly stresses that the categories of the traditional *Dogmengeschichte* (such as, in this case, those of *Geistchristologie* or "adoptionism") are inadequate to make sense of the problem, since they anachronistically reflect ideas and positions that came into being centuries after the composition of the *Shepherd*.[100] As for the specific problem of the inconsistent identification of the "son of God," Bucur follows Philippe Henne's argument that tends to see the section quoted above (*Similitudines*

5,6,4b–7) as an alternative interpretation of the parable. This second interpretation would be detached from the previous paragraphs and not focused at all on christology but merely on the moral instruction of the readers of the *Shepherd*.[101] Certainly there are signs that indicate a break in the flow of the argument in 5,6,4.[102] But it is difficult to agree with Henne and Bucur that such a break implies that nothing should be carried over from the preceding paragraphs and that the interpretive framework should change as radically as they maintain. From the point of view of the literary structure, for instance, Carolyn Osiek observes the continuing use of the singular σάρξ ("flesh") in 5,6,5–6, which is then changed into πᾶσα σάρξ ("all flesh") only in paragraph 7. This indicates that in the first two paragraphs the narrative still concerns a specific human being, Jesus. Osiek further notes the continuing use of the past tense in the section at hand for actions that do not belong to the original narrative of the parable. In all likelihood, this means that what is at issue here is something that has happened in the past with respect to Hermas's own time, that is, during the earthly life of the historical Jesus.[103]

More importantly for the purposes of the present inquiry, the final words of 5,6 continue the development of a thematic concern that is crucial for the overall rhetorical goals of the *Shepherd* and that is connected quite clearly to the phenomenon of spirit possession. Indeed, the question that Hermas poses to his supernatural interlocutor in 5,5,5 is extraordinary in the context of the literary production of the early Christ groups. Not only does the parable of *Similitudines* 5 cast the "son of God" as a slave (while, for instance, in the Gospel parables slaves have a merely instrumental function, in keeping with their social status in the ancient world). Moreover, Hermas makes explicit the dismay that might have been the most likely reaction of ancient readers and hearers confronted with such a text.[104] The answer of the Shepherd extends to 5,6 and articulates why it makes sense to speak of the "son of God" as a slave. As Osiek notes, the first part of the answer (5,6,1–3) shows that the subjection inherent to the slave's status in the parable hints at a deeper truth, because "the slave has had complete charge of the vineyard, but only in obedience."[105] But it is the second part of the answer (our paragraphs 5,6,5–7) that truly grounds this ambiguity in the lived experience of being a Christ believer as understood by Hermas. These paragraphs show that the ambivalent relationship between submission and power depends on the fact that being "Christian" for the *Shepherd* means essentially being possessed by the "holy spirit." This "spirit"—as it is apparent also in Paul—has always been the "son of God" and is now Christ. We have already seen repeatedly that the subjectivity of pos-

sessed individuals is often formed cross-culturally in the ambiguous and con-tinuously (re)negotiated space that stretches between the total submission of "hosts" and the mediums' fleeting control over their "spirits." Unequal social relationships, such as the master/slave one, have been often employed histori-cally as convenient idioms to speak and think of the frightening and powerful experience of possession. The same happens in Hermas too, as the *Shepherd* tries to express the ambiguity of this crucial phenomenon.[106] Possession is so decisive for Hermas because (as the text illustrates in 5,6,5–7) it constituted the subjectivity of Jesus as a model for the behavior of all his future follow-ers. Paragraphs 5–6 in particular describe Jesus's successful effort to cope with such an experience. The description cannot fail to recall the Gospel traditions that relate Jesus's possession by the foreign "spirit" of Beelzebul. The only difference—a very significant one—is that in the *Shepherd* the almost extreme foreignness of Beelzebul has been transformed into the more easily acceptable possession by the "holy spirit," which in the "now" of Hermas's readers has then taken up the personality of Christ himself.

Once *Similitudines* 5,6 is read as a unit and in the way sketched above, there are two main interpretive consequences worth mentioning. First, by putting the passage against the backdrop provided by the phenomenon of spirit possession the apparent inconsistency of the designation of the "son of God," once as "holy spirit" and once as "slave," becomes much less jarring. In fact, the ambiguity itself is inherent in the notion of the divisible and permeable self that is presupposed in possession. Indeed, the "son of God" is a "spirit" (as Bucur has shown) but is also the "slave" on those occasions in which the "spirit" possessed Jesus Christ in the course of the latter's earthly life. The two characters introduced in the interpretation of the parable do not designate only two aspects of Christ, as maintained by Bucur,[107] they also des-ignate different chronological stages in a christological trajectory.[108] This be-comes clear when we compare the passage from the *Shepherd* with Rom 1:3–4 read according to Dunn. In the Pauline verses as well, we distinguished three stages: the first one (preceding the earthly existence of Jesus Christ), in which only the "spirit," designated as "son of God," exists arguably from the begin-ning of time. Then one encounters the human figure of Jesus, who is the Jewish Messiah and who is possessed—intermittently and during his earthly life—by the same "holy spirit." The third and final stage is that in which Jesus Christ has become in a stable way—has been "appointed," in the language used by Paul in Rom 1—the "son of God" and thus logically also the "holy spirit." The same trajectory is deployed in a more narrative and decidedly

less terse way by Hermas in *Similitudines* 5. Once more, as I have repeated many times in this chapter, we must account for the attempt of both these authors to "confabulate" the contents of a lived experience in a theological and cognitive idiom that can cope only partially. Such complexity generates inconsistencies and conceptual gaps. That being said, it is worth noting that Rom 1:3–4 and Hermas's fifth similitude share some important secondary traits, such as the positive evaluation of the "fleshly" stage of the trajectory which—somewhat unusually for Paul—despite being less "glorious" than the spiritual is not intrinsically negative.[109] However, one can spot a relatively major difference between Paul and Hermas in the moment that signals the passage from the second to the third stage of the christological trajectory. For the apostle, the transformation is closely associated with Jesus's death and resurrection. But in the fifth similitude (in keeping with the *Shepherd*'s general lack of interest in the themes of Jesus's death and of the resurrection of the dead) it depends on the "flesh" successfully performing the work of keeping the people of God and itself undefiled.[110]

A second conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding comparison of Paul and Hermas concerns the association of the future fate of Christ followers with that of Christ himself by way of their being possessed by a πνεῦμα (which in turn is now Christ). This is what the apostle suggests to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 15 when he teaches that their bodies will be transformed into "spiritual bodies," as happened to the "first fruit" Christ. Likewise, as maintained by the majority of commentators of the *Shepherd, Similitudines* 5,6,7 clearly establishes that the same "holy spirit" possessed the "flesh" (Jesus) and now possesses "all flesh" (πᾶσα σάρξ).[111] As a consequence, all believers who will remain faithful will receive the same "reward" (μισθός) that Jesus Christ has received. It is important to stress that in both cases the value of such a promise stretches well beyond a mere eschatological or soteriological belief. Both for Paul and Hermas the model of Jesus's own possession and the embodiment of the Christ "spirit" in the Christ followers become a source of hope and moral action. Traditional interpretations have often opposed the hypothesis of a Pauline "mysticism" by implying that it would have necessarily detracted from ethical engagement or mindfulness for communal dynamics. However, as we will see in greater detail in the next chapter, far from being a solipsistic phenomenon, cross-cultural study of spirit possession has shown that possession can frequently become a strong impulse behind ethical action. The situation was arguably not different for Paul, Hermas, and their groups.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has started to look at the fundamental role played by spirit possession in the religious experience of Paul and of his Christ groups, beginning with their doctrinal and specifically christological elaborations. Being "in Christ" is the idiom through which Paul expresses the experience of possession by a πνεῦμα, which is identified with the risen Christ and which, through its presence in them, grants to believers salvation from the eschatological wrath and the expectation of eternal life. For Paul, Christ has achieved the state of existence designated as πνεῦμα through his death and resurrection, an idea that was shared also by other early Christ groups, as it is confirmed—albeit with some significant differences—by an examination of a key section in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Some of the preceding observations have already shown not only the centrality of possession in the doctrinal development of these Christ groups but also its crucial role in shaping collective memory and ethical reasoning. The following chapter will focus in greater detail on the latter themes, starting with the construction of communal self-representations.

If One Does Not Have the Spirit of Christ, One Does Not Belong to Him

THE FUNCTIONS OF SPIRIT POSSESSION
IN THE PAULINE GROUPS

In the previous chapter we examined the role that spirit possession played in shaping the doctrinal and christological thought of Paul and his Christ groups. In the following pages we will attend to the social and ethical dimensions of the religious experience. Recent ethnographic literature has illustrated how spirit possession can have a truly "productive" role in shaping socio-cultural constructs, ways of knowing, moral agency, and individual subjectivities. The present chapter shows that these same traits are recognizable in the Pauline Christ groups: in the use of the bodily metaphor, in the view that possession by the πνεῦμα is a way of knowing, and in the embodiment and reconfiguration of Otherness in the experience of Christ's death through possession. At the end of the chapter, we will analyze Paul's reference to his own "thorn in the flesh" as a reference to an ongoing failed and negative possession, which is however balanced by the successful possession by the Christ πνεῦμα to form the subjectivity of Paul as a Christ follower.

Particular attention will also be given to the forms in which possession enables a specific *poiesis* (in Michael Lambek's words) of the past. The sense of temporality underlying such an experience is remarkably different from the archival and academic study of history typical of western modernity. Through his very embodiment of the πνεῦμα of Christ, Paul (and arguably the other members of his groups) could make the person of Christ *present* in a way that affectively and effectively informed not only their remembrance of and

interaction with the past, but also their moral agency and even their subjectification as Christ believers.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Certainly one of the Pauline ideas that is most easily connected to spirit possession is that of the incorporation of Christ believers to form what the apostle calls the "body of Christ" (σῶμα Χριστοῦ in 1 Cor 12:27). The two main passages in which Paul refers to this notion are part of a long development at the center of the already mentioned 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12:4–5, which is clearly a summarized version of the previous one. It is evident too that the apostle conceives of the "body of Christ" as being the result of the intervention of the πνεῦμα on Christ believers.[1] Thus, it is quite reasonable to treat the incorporation in Christ as another development that results from the lived experience of being possessed by the πνεῦμα of Christ.[2]

To state that the incorporation in Christ derives from the lived experience of possession does not mean to deny that Paul could and did take advantage of the resources circulating in his socio-cultural environment to "confabulate" what he and others experienced. After all, the idiom of the body was widely used in antiquity to think and talk about political communities.[3] This "confabulation" emerges quite clearly in 1 Cor 12, in which, by referring to the harmonious collaboration of various body parts, Paul advances his argument against divisiveness and enmities within the Corinthian groups.[4] A more sustained reflection on this theme (and its implications for the organization of a possession cult, as the Pauline groups arguably were) will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

Likewise, we should welcome Engberg-Pedersen's proposals on a potential Stoic basis for Paul's idea of incorporation, in particular since they advance the opportunity of understanding incorporation literally as *material* participation in the "body of Christ."[5] However, Engberg-Pedersen himself remarks on a gap between "ideas" and "bodily experiences" over the course of his experimental Stoic-like reading of Paul. But such a gap becomes far more tractable once we start looking at the apostle's fundamental experience in terms of spirit possession (a move that Engberg-Pedersen does not make at all).

Such a move appears all the more natural inasmuch as spirit possession is the locale in which both the presence of "spirits" in the body of their devotees and the latter's incorporation in their deities is more evident than in almost any other religious or cultural practice. Indeed, it is the recognition of

embodiment as the defining feature of spirit possession that has enabled an-
thropologists to see how the practice of possession makes powerfully present
a host of cultural values such as myths, histories, social criticisms; reshaped
individual and communal identities, moral reasoning; and so forth. That is
the case also for the embodiment of a "spirit" (or a deity) as in the Pauline
groups. Indeed, while some types of possession do presuppose that the same
"spirit" should not be present in more than one "host" at the same time, other
cases are different. Sometimes the same "spirit" comes to occupy more than
one "host" at the same time. Usually this happens in situations that presup-
pose a complex interaction between the phenomenon of possession and the
construction of the identity of the group of which the "hosts" are part. For
instance, William Sax has produced an impressive description of the mani-
festation of the deity Bhairav among the Harijan, a low-caste group in the
Central Himalayas.[6] Sax identifies several means by which Bhairav becomes
present among the Harijan, beginning with ritual songs about his character
and his mythical exploits and encompassing storytelling and iconography.
However, by far the most powerful and effective means of representing Bhai-
rav is the deity's act of taking possession of his devotees. Such events can make
present with unparalleled power the harshness and suffering that characterize
the existence of the low-caste Harijan.[7] The resulting situation is one in which
Harijan's identity is inextricably intertwined with the capacity of being pos-
sessed by Bhairav. Sax illustrates quite well how mythical narratives and the
historical experience of suffering play a crucial role in and alongside posses-
sion in such cultural and religious process. It is clear that something very simi-
lar stood behind the Pauline experience of spirit possession. For one thing, the
identity of Christ-believers is inextricably linked to their being possessed by
the πνεῦμα (of Christ). In turn, their openness to possession by the πνεῦμα
(of Christ) constitutes them as veritable members of the Christ group. In such
dynamic moves—as in the case of the Harijan—myths and history play a fun-
damental role that will be taken into consideration again later in the chapter.

   Some ethnographic studies of possession cults have noted that the social
groups formed by practitioners and other interested parties usually overlap
with and diverge from existing social structures in complex ways. For in-
stance, Janice Boddy observed that, while constrained by the predominantly
patriarchal organization of Sudanese villages, groups of *zar* practitioners are
able to develop alternative structures by virtue of the new connections cre-
ated by the "spirits." *Zar* "spirits" are usually passed on through matrilinear
channels of succession. Thus, *zar* possession results in an effective affirmation

of alternative genealogies that might even be traced back to a Nubian sub-
stratum antedating the Arabic occupation of the region.[8] Among the socio-
cultural consequences of such a phenomenon, a very sophisticated complex
emerges when women who occupy certain positions within a given kinship
structure can be possessed by *zar* "spirits" that share kinship ties at odds or
even opposed to that of their respective "hosts." In the latter cases, the space
for transgressive creativity and even subversion becomes even greater. It is
possible to imagine that the possession by the πνεῦμα (of Christ) would have
put the members of the Christ groups in analogous situations with respect to
their preexisting social roles. In terms of kinship ties, it might be telling that
the Christ groups regularly employed a terminology of fictive kinship in ad-
dressing their members as "brothers" (a phenomenon that is attested beyond
the Pauline groups).[9] But even more significant is the fact that Paul must con-
tend on several occasions with behaviors of his addressees that appear to be at
odds with more general social mores. This is the case, for instance, in 1 Cor 7
with respect to marriage and sexual relations in ways that might indicate the
instability brought about by having become members of the Christ group.

It is worth stressing that these observations on the potentially transgressive
role played by possession cults should not lead to romanticizing either spirit
possession or its presence in the Pauline Christ groups. In fact, Boddy herself
in the above-mentioned study of the *zar* cults indicates that the subversion
operated by possession must always be understood within the constraints pro-
vided by hegemonic kinship structures in northern Sudan.[10] In this regard, it
can hardly be surprising to note that anthropological literature counts several
instances of spirit possession in which important aspects of the rituals or of
the practices overlap with and reinscribe existing social structures and social
orders. For instance, Richard Freeman has reported an interesting example
drawn from his work on Hindu possession rituals in northern Kerala in In-
dia. There, similar to other cases reviewed earlier, the singing of ritual chants
brings about the possession of designated individuals on the part of the local
teyyam deities, whose "spirits" normally inhabit shrine images.[11] Once pos-
sessed, the priests and dancers interact with the devotees attending the fes-
tivals in the shrines and provide divination and healings. It is important to
note that the *caitanyam* (the conscious personality) of the deity can possess
more than one "host" at the same time. Thus, one can often see the titular
priest of the shrine in addition to an itinerant *teyyam* dancer perform concur-
rently, even though in different locations within the shrine grounds. In most
cases, however, these performers have different caste or status positions. Thus,

rituals include moments in which, for instance, the lower-caste *teyyam* dancers seek permission from the higher-caste shrine-priests to perform the activities connected to possession.[12] As far as the Pauline groups are concerned, one may think of the way in which the apostle motivates the existence of a hierarchy among the *charismata* present in Corinth by showing that the "body of Christ" is naturally constituted by "members" that have different functions and dignities (in 1 Cor 12). It is quite difficult to establish whether the hierarchy of the *charismata* advanced by Paul subverts or reinscribes existing social or gender hierarchies, a theme to which we will return in the following chapter.[13] In any event, it bears emphasizing here that spirit possession is intertwined with other social and cultural orders in multiple and complicated ways through reinscription, reshaping, and also subversion.

The mention of the Pauline "body of Christ" leads us quite naturally to think about the ties that exist not only within a local group but also at the translocal level. As far as the ethnographic study of spirit possession is concerned, in recent years the analyses devoted to diasporic possession cults have increased exponentially in number and in theoretical depth.[14] In many cases, it has emerged that possession rituals and beliefs constitute a powerful means of creating connections (often welcomed, sometimes resisted) between expatriates and their original socio-cultural contexts. Ethnic diasporas and the movement of peoples are not phenomena restricted to the contemporary globalized world but certainly occurred in the past too.[15] Thus, it is worth considering whether possession cults might have had a similar role to play in other times as well, particularly in antiquity.

As far as the case of the Pauline groups is concerned, possession by the πνεῦμα (of Christ) could have had an analogous role in shaping their translocal character.[16] Here it is interesting to note that being possessed by the "spirit" of a foreigner (the Jew Jesus Christ)—and of a condemned criminal on top of that—fits quite well among the varied elements of Otherness, foreignness, and transgressiveness that often characterized (and characterize) possession cults. Such a scenario appears all the more appropriate when one considers that the Pauline communities were in all likelihood composed for the most part of non-Jews. For the all-important case of Corinth, Cavan Concannon has recently provided a convincing discussion of the ethnic self-identification of the Christ group.[17] Concannon rightly doubts that more than a few Jews (if any) were included among the Corinthians addressed by Paul. But Concannon also stresses that the members of the group maintained a "diasporic" self-identification, whose hybrid character was intensified by Paul's contradictory

expectations. Indeed, Paul required at the same time the assumption of typical Jewish behaviors (such as the refusal of idolatry) alongside an opposition to becoming entirely Jewish (epitomized in the firm rejection of circumcision). It is intriguing to imagine that such an ostensibly contradictory set of behaviors might have been strengthened by the practice of spirit possession with its inherent polyphony and coexistence of discordant identities, particularly in the case of possession of "Gentile" individuals by the "spirit" of a Jew.

Michael Lambek's recent study of the *tromba* cults in northwestern Madagascar is helpful here. The *tromba* are "spirits" of deceased Sakalava kings that possess Malagasy men and women and, through them, perform divinations and healings. Lambek's study of the *tromba* cults will be taken up again later in the present chapter, but it is worth mentioning here what Lambek observes with respect to the financial upkeep of the shrines in which the relics of the dead sovereigns are preserved. In describing the activities of Kassim, a medium of the powerful eighteenth-century Sakalava king Ndramboeny, Lambek illustrates how Kassim took the lead in the ambitious project of refurbishing the king's shrine in the 1990s.[18] In particular, Kassim played a crucial role in contacting devotees of the *tromba* "spirit" who could contribute financial support for this work, in collecting the money himself, and finally in channeling those contributions to the appointed contractors who performed the works on the shrine's site at a significant distance from Kassim's hometown of Mahajanga. It is remarkable to see how, through Kassim's mediation, spirit possession understood as a social practice becomes a powerful means of translocal connectivity. The entire project is financed with the money that Kassim was able to receive from practitioners and devotees residing not only all over the island but also in the French colony of La Réunion and even in metropolitan France itself.[19]

Kassim's case as described by Lambek immediately evokes a parallel with Paul's work on the collection to support the poor among the Christ groups of Judea.[20] While it is true that Paul does not gesture explicitly toward spirit possession as the grounds for his case for participation in the collection, there are indicators that point in that direction. For instance, in 2 Cor 8–9 the apostle insists on inscribing the dynamics of exchange with an idiom of "gift-giving" (χάρις), in which the Corinthian response matches God's original beneficent acts toward them. This strongly reminds the reader that Paul considers the pneumatic *charismata* as the most important divine "gift" to the Christ believers. Moreover, this "gift" is explicitly connected to the imitation of Christ's voluntary impoverishment in order to make the Christ believers

"rich" (2 Cor 8:9).[21] Such a rhetorical move evokes the recurring Pauline trope of imitation of Christ's fate, which cannot be reduced to mere moral instruction but entails an actual embodiment through possession. Lambek notes that Kassim's financial endeavors are one more piece of evidence to the effect that spirit possession ought to be conceived as a veritable and effective source of moral activity. This aspect is very much present also in the phenomenon of possession as it is encountered in the Pauline groups. As far as the collection is concerned, it is clear that being possessed by the πνεῦμα (of Christ) is a fundamental building block in the constitution of Paul and his fellow Christ believers as moral agents even with respect to socioeconomic matters.

This section has examined several ways in which spirit possession contributed to shaping the social identities of Christ believers by incorporating them into a "body of Christ" with specific social articulations and ethical requirements. Another element that is worth mentioning here and that would deserve further exploration in a study that went beyond Paul and his communities is that of succession in spirit possession. Once again, it is Michael Lambek who has studied—in the possession cults of Mayotte—the role of succession across generations in "hosting" a specific "spirit."[22] Lambek observed that the manifestation of the same "spirit"—oftentimes even at the same time—in "hosts" belonging to different generations but to the same kin group supports the articulation of "family as a social unity."[23] Likewise, one may think about the succession in being possessed by the πνεῦμα (of Christ) as a means to articulate across generations the social organization not of kinship groups but of religious groups, which in this case might actually represent themselves as fictive kinship groups. Indeed, "hosting" the πνεῦμα is well attested in later Christian texts as an instrument through which historical memory is systematized and authority is ascribed. An instance could be the Pseudo-Clementine novel's articulation of historical temporality as a succession of "incarnations" of the "true prophet."[24] Further analysis of these dynamics might enrich our understanding of phenomena (such as the "montanist" controversies) that are at times oversimplified through the wooden application of the Weberian paradigm of traditional or bureaucratic authorities succeeding the charismatic one.

POSSESSION BY THE Πνεῦμα (OF CHRIST) AS A WAY OF KNOWING

The preceding pages have examined how Paul's writings illustrate the role of possession by the πνεῦμα (of Christ) as a means to articulate the social

structure of the Christ groups as the "body of Christ." In several cross-cultural studies anthropologists have observed that spirit possession has other functions beyond that of social structuring, such as being a source of moral activity and a way of knowing. The latter aspect has already been addressed in previous chapters by showing how the embodiment of foreign identities through possession enables individuals and communities to "know" their mythical or historical past. A similar phenomenon is conceivable for the Pauline groups too, inasmuch as the πνεῦμα (of Christ) ought to be understood as Other for the mainly "Gentile" membership of the communities.

Indeed, Engberg-Pedersen's careful analysis of the Pauline dealings with πνεῦμα contributes great clarity to this issue too. In particular, Engberg-Pedersen treats at length the cognitive aspect of the activities of the πνεῦμα. This illustrates insightfully how considering the "spirit" a material being does not by any means preclude its role in providing knowledge to the Christ believers. For instance, Engberg-Pedersen makes the most of a notoriously complicated passage such as 1 Cor 2:10–16 by showing how the latter implies both the cognitive activity of the πνεῦμα and its materiality.[25] However, in this as in other junctures of his seminal book, the author seems to shy away from pushing his reasoning to its ultimate conclusions. It would be very easy to conclude that what Paul is discussing is indeed possession of the Christ believers by the πνεῦμα. Such an experience is at its root also a cognitive one, generating knowledge, social organization, and moral action.[26]

Thus, it is appropriate also to examine in what sense the Pauline description of Christ possession might function as a way of knowing not only in the experience of embodying the Other but also as a resource for future ethical action and reasoning. A well-known example is provided by the measures that Paul suggests to the Christ group with respect to the case of a Corinthian man who is found guilty of incest (1 Cor 5:3–5)[27]:

3 Ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον 4 ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, 5 παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.

3 For I, being absent with respect to the body but present with respect to the spirit, have already judged, as if I were present, the one who committed this action in such a way, 4 so that, when you and my spirit

were assembled in the name of our lord Jesus[28] with the power of our lord Jesus, 5 we may give that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that the spirit be preserved on the day of the lord.

The presence in this difficult passage of the echo of a cursing formula that is also encountered in some magical texts has been recognized at least since Deissmann's interpretation of the verses.[29] Despite some undeniable problems associated with this proposal,[30] the relevant role played by "spirits" (among which are that of Christ and that of Satan) in 1 Cor 5:3–5 proves that the parallel is indeed meaningful. However, the context is not that of "magical" practices but more precisely that of a possession cult. Two pieces of evidence point in this direction. First, the "spiritual judgment" performed by the assembly of the Corinthians in union with the "spirit" of Paul *through* the "power" of Jesus Christ (which, in this case, certainly stands for the πνεῦμα of Christ). Such union is certainly something more than a generic unity of intents, as Paul himself underscores quite strongly through the rhetorical play on the presence/absence binary in verse 3. Despite his bodily absence, the Corinthians nevertheless experience Paul as present because of their common participation in the "body of Christ."

Such observation leads to the second feature of the passage that appears to be linked to Christ possession. Paul explains his reasons to "excommunicate" the incestuous Corinthian by saying that this individual must be given over to Satan for "the destruction of the flesh" and the preservation "of the spirit" in the last day. The referents for this flesh/spirit binary have been the object of an intense exegetical discussion. It appears difficult to refer the binary respectively to the individual "flesh" and "spirit" of the sinner.[31] Instead, Adela Yarbro Collins, by way of an appropriate comparison with a few Qumranic texts, shows that "flesh" should be taken as "those elements and aspects of creation hostile to God" and "spirit" as "the Holy Spirit of God that dwells in the community."[32] Thus, a reading that respects the usual way in which Paul treats the flesh/spirit binary shows that the apostle's concern is primarily for the preservation of the πνεῦμα, which is very concretely and very materially present in the group, the "body of Christ."[33] We will see again later that such a protective attitude toward the πνεῦμα is a recurrent concern of Paul, particularly in the letters addressed to the Corinthians. Indeed, it highlights a major similarity between the Pauline idiom of possession and those observed cross-culturally, and it strengthens the understanding of possession as a source of moral reasoning and action.

The cognitive component in the activity of "spirits" can become so effectively present to the human "hosts" to dictate literally their actions even when the "spirit" is not manifestly present. This is something that can already be identified in Paul's hint in 1 Thess 2:18 at the malevolent hindrances posed by Satan to his desire to visit personally the Christ believers of Thessalonica.[34] There is little doubt that the passage from 1 Thessalonians can be read as purely metaphorical. Certainly, however, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, trying to inscribe himself or herself into the Pauline tradition, developed this feature of the "spirit" activity in an even fuller form. In Acts, the πνεῦμα manifests its presence almost at any major step of the narrative trajectory that brings the Christ groups from being a beleaguered group hiding in Jerusalem to the successful preaching of Paul in Rome.[35] The πνεῦμα takes possession of the twelve at Pentecost or of the centurion Cornelius and of his household after their baptism (a possession that is signified by the act of "speaking in tongues"). By this manifestation it authorizes decisive steps such as the beginning of the Christ mission or the first inclusion of an uncircumcised Gentile. For all intents and purposes, the πνεῦμα directs the fundamental choices of the Christ groups, as in the famous episode of the "apostolic council" whose final decisions are communicated in a message authorized by "the holy spirit and us."[36] Despite enjoying such a crucial position, there is little question that the πνεῦμα loses a great deal of his personality and fails completely to retain its identification with Christ in Acts with respect to what has been observed in the authentic letters of Paul. Nevertheless, Luke occasionally retains traces of a more personal representation of the πνεῦμα. This happens in the narrative of Paul's second missionary travel, when in Acts 16:6 the apostle and his companions are "forbidden by the holy spirit to preach the word in Asia [κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ]." Almost in the same breath, they are also prevented from going to Bithynia by the agency of what is now called "the spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7).[37]

If Luke worked to reduce the personal role that the πνεῦμα enjoyed in the authentic Pauline letters, there is however another early Christ writing in which the action of the πνεῦμα is depicted in ways that maintain the trait. The Acts of Paul is a second-century text that, like canonical Acts of the Apostles, tries to claim the legacy of the historical Paul.[38] It describes an extraordinary episode that takes place at the end of Paul's stay in Corinth, before the apostle leaves to continue his travels toward Rome (ActPl 12). The proceedings of a meeting of the Corinthian Christ group can be reconstructed from the surviving lines of a Greek fragmentary papyrus preserved in Hamburg.[39]

The members of the group are despondent about Paul's departure and depressed by their fear of not seeing him again. Thus, the apostle, "filled by a holy spirit" (πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου), gives a short encouraging speech in which he exhorts them to put their efforts into fasting and communal love. Paul also prophesies about his going into a "furnace of fire" (εἰς κάμινον πυρός), a reference to Rome, where he will indeed be killed in the final narrative episodes of the Acts of Paul. Paul states that God will give him the "power" (δύναμις) to withstand such a trial as he did for two heroes of the Jewish tradition who are adduced as *exempla*.[40] As soon as the apostle has concluded his speech, another member of the Christ group, Cleobius, happens to be "in the spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι γενηθείς).[41] Cleobius confirms Paul's encouraging words, but he goes beyond them by stating explicitly that the apostle's fate is to die in Rome, a victim of envy for his missionary success, so that God's plan might come to be fulfilled. The members of the Christ group are not convinced even after this second utterance of the spirit. Thus, they proceed to pray to God that Paul might be spared and that he might remain in Corinth. Such an invocation is followed by a badly damaged paragraph, but from its remnants it appears that the apostle presents a eucharistic offering that breaks into pieces by itself.[42] The unusual event is left unexplained by Paul, but another member of the group, Myrta, is possessed by the spirit. She goes on to clarify that the sign of the broken bread indicates the success that will attend the apostle's preaching in Rome ("Paul, the slave of God, . . . will feed many with the word"). When Myrta's short speech is over and "her spirit was reduced to order" (κατασταλέντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἐν Μύρτῃ),[43] the members of the group are finally able to rejoice together with Paul and to break their fast.

This passage conveys a host of very significant information, in particular about the ways in which the meetings of an early Christ group might have been arranged. But, to remain within the limits of the issue at hand, Peter Dunn has already observed that the way in which the Acts of Paul describe the manifestation of the spirit is clearly modeled on the instructions given by the "historical" Paul in 1 Cor 14.[44] Thus, one can see that the Acts of Paul introduce only three speakers (Paul himself, Cleobius, and Myrta) for the πνεῦμα and that they all take turns, in keeping with Paul's advice to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 14:29–31.[45] The passage, however, is not in all likelihood a straight fictional narrativization of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians. For the last—and arguably the most influential—of the "prophets" is a woman, Myrta, in apparently direct contradiction to what Paul says at end of the same chapter 14

(vv. 33b–34) with respect to women remaining silent in the meetings of the Christ groups.[46] Dunn suggests that this feature of the Acts of Paul might be explained with the hypothesis that the author of the apocryphal text used a copy of 1 Corinthians in which 14:33b–34 were not included. Indeed, these verses have a troubled text critical history. Thus, Dunn might have a good point in surmising that they were inserted into chapter 14 as a way to fight against the "montanist" prophecy, in which women apparently played a key role. However, Dunn's hypothesis requires an overly complex scenario and, more importantly, presupposes a history of formation of the Acts of Paul that is based exclusively on the fictional rewriting of literary antecedents. While this might be true in part, it seems simpler and thus more convincing to suggest another reason for the Acts of Paul's divergence from the "model" of 1 Cor 14. The difference might be due to their author's reliance on the direct experience of actual meetings of a Christ group and of the actual spirit possession that took place there. In this scenario, the author of the Acts of Paul might have created his or her fiction by mixing the authoritative literary model of 1 Cor 14 with his or her direct experience of women prophesying in Christ group meetings. Such a conclusion is all the more reasonable since the "prophetic" role of women is well attested in early Christian writings into the second century and is not by any means only limited to "montanist" contexts.[47]

As far as the issue of spirit possession as a way of knowing is concerned, the passage from Acts of Paul 12 provides an extraordinary exemplification of how this might have happened in the Pauline groups and in some of those Christ groups that picked up the Pauline legacy in the second century. An important—and very emotional—problem concerning the fate of the Corinthian group and of Paul himself is settled through the intervention of the πνεῦμα whose voice is conveyed collaboratively by different "hosts." Each of the "prophets" says different things and speaks with a slightly different tone, but ultimately the polyphony of the voices finds consistency under the unitary agency that is attributed to the πνεῦμα. A resolution for the plight of the group is mystified as the will of the πνεῦμα but is also powerfully embodied not only through the symbolic miracle of the bread breaking by itself but even more so through the ritual of spirit possession.

POSSESSION AS THE POIESIS OF HISTORY

A feature of some types of "spirit" possession that has received scant scholarly attention but could potentially be of great value in the study of

the Pauline epistolary concerns their relationship with different regimes of historicity and temporality. In previous chapters we have seen how in several cross-cultural cases the identities of "spirits" enable some forms of possession to become very effective means to embody mythical and historical pasts. The case of Jesus's possession by Beelzebul and those of the "impure spirits" exorcized by Jesus in the early Gospel traditions can be read as instances of such embodiment of Otherness and of mythical history. Once we have established the premise that the possession occurring in the Pauline groups was possession by a πνεῦμα that in turn had the personality of the resurrected Jesus, it stands to reason that these cases should also be regarded as instances of the embodiment of a very specific historical past.

In recent years, Michael Lambek has attended to the ways in which some types of possession bring to life the historical past and to the ways in which such phenomena interact with other cultural and social structures.[48] Lambek's study starts from his ethnographic observation of the already mentioned *tromba* possession in Madagascar. The *tromba* are understood to be the "spirits" of deceased Sakalava sovereigns, and they regularly possess specific mediums such as the above-mentioned Kassim. Particular features that are tied to the circumstances of their life and to the historical period in which the latter took place characterize each *tromba*'s personality. This makes *tromba* possessions a very effective means through which the historical past (or, better, several historical *pasts*) are made present and open to the experience of the mediums and—through them—of the devotees. Lambek describes at length how the often concomitant presence of several "spirits" of Sakalava sovereigns hailing from different historical times generates a peculiar sense of temporality among the Sakalava.

To conceptualize such a specific experience, the anthropologist has recourse to categories derived from Aristotle's reflections on the nature of history and of human knowledge of the past. In opposition to the sharp and unbridgeable Platonic dichotomy between rational understanding and participative mimesis, Lambek prefers to employ the more pliable and fuzzy trichotomy that he borrows from the Aristotelian description of human intellectual faculties as *theoria, praxis,* and *poiesis.*[49] One might very well quibble with some aspects of Lambek's use of Aristotle—in particular, with the opposition to Plato and the disqualification of mimesis—but his threefold arrangement nicely highlights the specificity of the phenomenon that he wants to describe. Indeed, *theoria* understood as "rational apprehension" aptly encompasses the distancing gaze that characterizes the western academic study of the past. In

turn, *praxis* can indicate the "practical use" to which the past is put in social or collective memory. Seen against such a backdrop, the sense of temporality that comes to life in the *tromba* possession does not fit either mold. However, it can be aptly apprehended as *poiesis,* the Aristotelian "productive creation or making."[50] In the more flexible Aristotelian trichotomy, *poiesis* and the type of historical experience that can be described through it share some of the features of both *theoria* and *praxis* but cannot be completely identified with either of them. With respect to the distancing apprehension of rational study (*theoria*), *poiesis* benefits from making present the past through possession. Thus—in Lambek's words—"the past is far from escaping the present: the past calls upon the present with a literally imperious insistence, yet moves continuously in and out of focus."[51] However, Lambek warns that it would be wrong to interpret such direct engagement and such blurring of the boundaries between past and present as yet another form of an active production of history. Against this conclusion one must observe that among the Sakalava the coming to life of the past in possession is a highly formalized and ritualized event. This is especially evident in the peculiar personalities of each *tromba* spirit, which are—as we will see more precisely below—largely fixed and defined by a very limited number of key episodes purposefully selected out of their historical biographies.

If one accepts the assumption that Christ was present and was brought to life within the Pauline groups chiefly as a πνεῦμα possessing the members, then it becomes obvious that the dynamics occurring in Corinth or Thessalonica must have been very similar to those described by Lambek. In particular, the understanding of Sakalava dealing with their past in terms of *poiesis* can contribute substantially to our grasp of the sense of history that developed within the Christ groups. The latter theme has always been a subject of lively critical discussion among New Testament scholars. It is routinely observed that Paul rarely makes reference to actual sayings of Jesus in his letters and that the apostle seems to know very little about the historical Jesus beyond the bare data of his death and resurrection.[52] In this perspective, some more skeptical scholars have opined that Paul lacked any direct knowledge of the historical Jesus's teaching. Thus, his almost exclusive theological focus on Jesus's death and resurrection was a way to construe the cult of Christ as yet another Greco-Roman salvation myth. As a reaction, more conservative exegetes have systematically mined the epistles with the aim of unearthing traces of Paul's literary dependence on or at least knowledge of sayings that were later included in the Gospels.

There is no space here to tackle this complicated issue in full. However, it is worth noting that the debate has been almost always framed in terms that—to use Lambek's words once more—"remain confined by questions of objectivity and of truth narrowly conceived."[53] By and large, such a problematic state of affairs is produced by an overly ethnocentric approach to the issues of historicity and of the remembrance of the past. Thus, the problem of Paul's knowledge of the historical Jesus is almost always framed by employing paradigms that are appropriate for western academic historical research but do not fit other socio-cultural contexts well.[54] Scholars have rarely attempted to employ alternative paradigms of temporality as, for instance, in those few studies that have explored the possibility of a "prophetic" preservation and expansion of the memory of Jesus in the Pauline groups. Nevertheless, the results of these inquiries have remained significantly conditioned by western academic criteria of truth and objectivity. Thus, for instance, two pioneering and very influential studies of "prophetic" activity by Eugene Boring and David Aune have been substantially produced in response to a research agenda sketched decades ago by Ernst Käsemann.[55] For the most part these studies have focused on establishing whether single verses or parts of them could be considered "prophetic" utterances expressed in the context of the liturgical life of Pauline groups.

In contrast, by understanding the memory of Jesus as a form of *poiesis* stemming from the experience of Christ possession,[56] one might escape the problematic constraints of ethnocentrism. Lambek rightly observes that "the critical point is that recognizing the poetical dimension of history does not require conceptualizing it in terms of the mythical, the irrational, the non-empirical, or the unreal. [. . .] My argument is clearly not that the dominant Western and Sakalava modes of representing the past are identical, but that the flamboyance of Sakalava practice—with its puns and liquor, its royal corpses rising to life and mimetically enacting their deaths—does not discount it from being a discourse of the real."[57] The very same words (possibly with the exception of the reference to "liquor") can be profitably applied to our understanding of historicity in the Pauline groups. Thinking about the relationship between believers and Christ in terms of πνεῦμα possession and of the *poiesis* of history does not mean to discount the effectiveness or the "reality" of such an experience of the past. On the contrary, it enables us to envisage an alternative way to enact the "memory" of the past along lines similar to those sketched—for the very controversial case of the historical Jesus—by Denise Buell at the intersection between cyborg ontology and haunting.[58]

One finds a convenient proof that such an interpretive frame can capture some otherwise difficult traits of historicity in the Pauline groups through the analysis of the disproportionate role played in the apostle's letters by Jesus's death and resurrection. Several scholars have routinely noted that this feature corresponds to a lack of interest of Paul for other aspects of the life of the historical Jesus. But it is an unhelpful simplification to treat it as evidence of the apostle's ignorance or of his being influenced by Greco-Roman salvation myths. Lambek's description of *tromba* possession is particularly useful here. Indeed, the circumstances of the royal deaths are especially important for the establishment of the personal and moral characters of the various *tromba* "spirits." Thus, the deaths of the sovereigns are symbolically, but no less powerfully, connected with the lives of the mediums who embody the "spirits." Lambek notes, for instance, that mediums must observe special *taboos* on the day of the week in which their *tromba* spirit died or that they must reenact a sort of death and resurrection of the sovereign by passing under a shroud when they become possessed by the *tromba.*[59]

The latter observations should not lead to adopt too quickly the *tromba* cults of possession as a direct model for what took place in the Pauline groups. It is not enough to observe that in both cases historical figures became "spirits" through their deaths. Such a move would make for too facile and superficial a comparison to be convincing. After all, the differences are much more significant and cannot be easily put aside. One example is the role that resurrection—as we have seen in the previous chapter—plays in the establishment of Jesus as a πνεῦμα, while that is certainly not the case in the *tromba* cults.

In fact, a deeper and arguably more significant analogy does exist between *tromba* and Pauline πνεῦμα possession. In both cases, the personalities of the "spirits" who come to possess their devotees are profoundly defined and to a certain extent "fixed" by some specific events of their historical biography (which, merely as a matter of coincidence, happen to be the circumstances of their deaths). As Lambek describes this aspect of *tromba* possession, "characters are portrayed as unchanging in their own time. In their contemporary appearance their biography changes little; the events of their lives become fixed in a kind of permanent display, except insofar as they address the concerns of those who consult them in the present and insofar as the biographical time of their mediums is intimately entwined with them."[60] This short description fits remarkably well the most likely scenario obtaining in the Pauline groups once they are understood through the hints preserved in the apostle's authentic letters. The character of Jesus Christ is thus

"fixed" in a kind of permanent state that is radically shaped and constrained by the events of his death and resurrection. In turn, this Jesus Christ (because of the powerful influence exercised by him through possession) shapes the core beliefs widespread among the members of the group. Variations on such a foundational paradigm happen only when the biography of the Christ πνεῦμα becomes entangled with the lived concerns of individual believers or of the groups. Such a scenario can provide a good account of most of the occasional references encountered in the Pauline epistolary to acts or more often sayings of Jesus not directly connected with his death and resurrection. In almost all these instances such references are mobilized to address contingent ethical or doctrinal concerns of Paul or of other members of the Christ groups to whom he writes.[61]

These observations provide an appropriate context to understand better why Paul seems always to associate his mentions of possession by the πνεῦμα with explicit and powerful descriptions of the embodiment of Jesus's death and resurrection. Such is the case, for instance, in the famous opening mention of the consequences of baptism in Rom 6:3–4:

3 Ἦ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; 4 Συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρός, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν.

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Most scholars think that Paul is using the specific rhetorical question of verse 3 to present to his Roman addressees the relatively new notion that the incorporation "in Christ" that they experience through charismatic phenomena is mediated through the ritual of baptism.[62] Thus, the Pauline statement that baptism is performed "into Christ Jesus" is a means for the apostle to express the idea that being baptized grants the inclusion "into" the Christ πνεῦμα concretely manifested through possession.[63] As far as the present issue is concerned, it is important to underscore that Paul equates being baptized "into Jesus Christ" with being baptized "into his death." Thus, being pos-

sessed by the Christ πνεῦμα means to die and even to be buried with him. The analogy with the *tromba* possession described by Lambek is impressive, but remarkable are also the differences. In the case of the Pauline possession, being "in Christ" and dying with him becomes the assurance that the believer will also be risen as Jesus was (because Christ believers have the down payment, they also "have the πνεῦμα"). In the case of the *tromba* possessions, by contrast, mediums are not given even a slight hope of sharing the same mode of survival of their "spirits": as Lambek remarks, it is precisely such unbridgeable distinctions between the fate of the sovereigns and that of the common Sakalava people that demarcate and continuously reinscribe the fundamental social hierarchy within Sakalava groups.

The conformation with Jesus's death and resurrection in Rom 6 can be dismissed as an instance of metaphorical language or—at best—of liturgical symbolism, given the occurrence of a baptismal idiom. But such a reductionist strategy (which is rendered easier because the symbolic reading has become so ingrained through centuries of sacramental theology) cannot be deployed with the same effectiveness in other passages. For instance, Paul's language acquires an even more vibrant tone in 2 Cor 4:7–12:

7 Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ᾖ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν· 8 ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ᾽ οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι, ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι, 9 διωκόμενοι ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι, καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι, 10 πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ· 11 ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. 12 Ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν.

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it might be clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. 11 For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

This remarkable passage has attracted a good deal of exegetical attention, and it deserves a more thorough discussion, but for the purpose of the present treatment it may suffice to emphasize a couple of major points. First of all, Engberg-Pedersen has recently illustrated the process so powerfully described in 2 Cor 4:10–11: it presupposes the activity of the πνεῦμα at a concretely material level in the bodies of Paul and to a certain extent of the other Christ believers to whom he is writing.[64] It is easy to see that indirect references to the πνεῦμα bookend the verses quoted above. In this regard the key element is the "treasure" that Christ believers possess: this is certainly a metaphor that Paul explains in verse 4:13 using the very telling phrase "the spirit of faith" (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως). The same theme is anticipated in verses 4 and 6 through the mentions of the "illumination" (φωτισμός) shining in the hearts of the followers of Jesus. In all likelihood such interior "illumination" should be understood as a product of the indwelling πνεῦμα. Likewise, at the end of the short section quoted above, Paul goes back to the theme of possession of τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως. In 4:14 he connects it explicitly with the knowledge and the promise of a resurrection similar to that of Jesus, a thread that he had already introduced in verses 10–11.

The association between πνεῦμα possession and resurrection is obviously a very common theme that has been observed repeatedly in this chapter and in the previous one. Indeed, the πνεῦμα for Paul always has the primary function of being a guarantee of the future resurrection. However, a passage such as 2 Cor 4:7–11 also introduces an association with Jesus's death, and it does so in a way that strongly emphasizes its bodily manifestation. Scholars have discussed the meaning and the modality of such a manifestation of Jesus's death. In order to make sense of Paul's statements, most exegetes refer to the missionary hardships, which Paul lists in a very artful manner in verses 8–9. The apostle returns to the same theme again later in the letter in longer passages from chapters 6 and 12. In this interpretive perspective, all the suffering and pain faced by the apostle in the course of his missionary travels become metaphorically the locale in which the addressees ought to see the illustration both of Jesus's passion and of the vindication that is necessarily present within it.[65] Other scholars have tried to be even more specific, for instance by suggesting that verse 10 may contain a hint at Paul's troubles with the civic authorities in Ephesus. Then, coupled with verse 11 (which is an almost perfect parallel) verse 10 may associate Paul's fate with that of the historical Jesus.[66]

Undoubtedly such proposals do capture a very important element of Paul's reasoning in the letter. The catalogues of hardships are indeed rhetori-

cally associated with the suffering of Jesus. Such a link does provide powerful support for Paul's claim to apostolic authority and for his call to his addressees to imitate him. Nevertheless, we might legitimately wonder whether hardships are truly the primary means through which Jesus's death (and implicitly also his resurrection) becomes bodily manifest to (and maybe in) the Corinthian Christ believers.[67] Two considerations might lead one to think that something more is at play here. First, as noted by a few scholars,[68] despite its sure rhetorical effectiveness, the pairing of the hardships list with verses 10–11 (the death and resurrection of Jesus) is not a perfect match from a structural and theological point of view. In brief, while vindication is already apparent in the hardships themselves (because of Paul's arguably God-given ability to escape complete destruction), that is not the case when it comes to the pair death/resurrection. As far as the historical Jesus is concerned, resurrection and vindication have already taken place, but in two chronologically distinct moments and slightly differently from the dynamics of Pauline hardships. In the latter, vindication seems already to be part of the trial (such that the apostle is persecuted but—even in that situation—is not crushed; he is afflicted, but he does not despair; and so on). The case is even more different when one looks at the situation of Paul himself (and arguably of the other Christ believers too): his association with Jesus's death might already be realized in the hardships, but resurrection is something not yet present and should instead be expected in the future. This is a point that Paul had emphasized for the same Corinthians in a preceding communication, as witnessed by the long treatment of 1 Cor 15. Obviously, most of these difficulties are smoothed out, if not eliminated altogether, when one hypothesizes that verses 10–11 are meant to say not that Jesus's death and resurrection are manifest through Paul's hardships but that the latter are just the second part of an analogy and that the means of manifestation of Jesus's death and resurrection is a different one. Given the broader context of the pericope, it seems that the most likely alternative ought to be that Jesus's death and resurrection are manifested in instances of πνεῦμα possession.

This preliminary conclusion leads almost naturally to the second set of critical observations for those interpreters who equate Paul's hardships and the bodily manifestation of Jesus's death and resurrection. First of all, to conceive of such a manifestation in terms of pastoral hardships or, even more so, of preaching is a solution ideologically more attuned to the ethos of modern ministers (and professors of theology) than to that of ancient or non-Western contemporary cultures. The theological bias that casts "charismatic"

and "pneumatic" phenomena as dangerous means to escape the otherwise too heavy requirements of history and morality certainly played a role in shaping such a hermeneutical state of affairs.[69] As far as such traditional objections are concerned, the preceding pages have illustrated that—as is well attested for several non-Western cultures in the ethnographic literature—spirit possession is a cultural practice that fosters moral behavior as well as a strong sense of historicity. As we have seen so far, there are plenty of reasons to be confident that the same was true for πνεῦμα possession in the Pauline Christ groups too. There remains the very likely possibility that just such possession was also the medium through which Jesus's death and resurrection could become manifest in Paul's body to the Corinthian addressees. The likelihood of this hypothesis is reinforced by several critical opinions. Many exegetes—despite being unable for various ideological reasons to bring themselves to embrace explicitly the option of πνεῦμα possession—describe the scenario presupposed in 2 Cor 4:7–12 in ways that lack only the name "possession."[70] Thus, for example, Margaret Thrall insists that Paul's words clearly presuppose an *objective* revelation of Jesus's death and resurrection. The latter was grounded in the fact that the apostle "thought in this way because of his deeper belief that he participated in a fundamental union with Christ whereby he became so closely associated with Christ's death that it was *this* death that was in some way reproduced in his own experience."[71] Likewise, Jan Lambrecht concludes that "a kind of ontological union with Christ is presupposed by Paul."[72]

These circumlocutions—and, in other cases, the resistance even to address this key problem[73]—demonstrate that a different approach is sorely needed. And, in truth, it has been already adopted by Merrill Proudfoot as well as by Christopher Mount, who has provided the most convincing reading of these and other similar passages.[74] In brief, one might be best served by adopting the hermeneutical principle so effectively defended by Engberg-Pedersen (even though he himself fails to apply it consistently in those cases in which possession may be in play): not to fall prey to the temptation to treat as metaphors those elements of Paul's religious experience that are foreign to our western sensibilities but to dare to take them literally. In this regard, it can scarcely be maintained that Jesus's death and resurrection became manifest to the Corinthians only through listening to Paul's preaching, reading his letters, or even contemplating the extraordinary feats of his apostolic zeal. In all likelihood, this happened also through his being possessed by the Christ πνεῦμα.

A few features of the cluster 4:7–12 are better illuminated by such a conclusion. First, it is easier to understand the unusual—for Paul—mention of

the "death *of Jesus*" and the "life *of Jesus.*" In most passages in which the apostle touches on similar concepts, his favorite phrases include "Christ" and not "Jesus." But in verses 10–11 it seems that Paul is making the specific point of referring to the death and resurrection of the historical figure of Jesus. This is consistent with what has been observed above with respect to the *tromba* possession described by Lambek, in which the sense of historicity is rendered powerfully present even though some traits of the spirits' biographies are given more relevance than others. Likewise, the much-discussed νέκρωσις that occurs in 4:10 does indeed carry a slightly different nuance from the θάνατος of the following verse.[75] The Greek word in its rather rare occurrences can indicate either a process of "mortification" (of "becoming dead") or the state of being dead. Exegetes are generally in agreement that the latter nuance is more suitable for the context of 2 Cor 4.[76] Moreover, Thomas Schmeller points out that the entirety of verse 10 depicts a situation in which Paul parades the manifestation of Jesus's death in and through his own body. Such a phrasing cannot fail to remind one of what he had written in 1 Cor 4:9 ("For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death [ἐπιθανατίους], because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals").[77] Against such a backdrop, it becomes even more natural to understand the phenomenon behind Paul's words as spirit possession. Nevertheless, the other nuance of νέκρωσις ("mortification" as a process) should not be discarded too hastily either.[78] It appears that Paul might be playing with the semantic ambiguity inherent in the word νέκρωσις. If that is the case, then this "mortification" can also indicate a process through which Paul becomes more and more deeply united to Christ's death. Thus, the possession of the apostle by the πνεῦμα ought not to be conceived as occasional or even as a sequence of self-standing episodes. On the contrary, as we have seen in the first chapter, possession consisted often in the progressive construction of a new subjectivity through negotiation and growth. In the case of Paul, this trajectory seems to tend toward a point where the apostle's persona will be indistinguishable from the character of Christ, which is in turn—as we have seen above—defined by his death and resurrection.

This last observation might also have consequences for the interpretation of verse 11, in which Paul states that "we, the living ones, always παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦ to death." Most exegetes correctly recognize that the passive verb παραδίδωμι ("giving over") is used here to evoke the story of Jesus's "being handed over" to the Roman authorities. Such a reference fits a context in which the apostle is insisting on the vivid representation of Jesus's death to

the eyes of the Corinthians. However, one might wonder whether the common rendition of διὰ Ἰησοῦ as "for the sake of Jesus" or "on account of Jesus," albeit undisputable from a lexicographical point of view, truly captures what Paul is saying here. Mainstream exegesis presupposes that the apostle is here underscoring his willingness to withstand any kind of suffering because of his unshakeable allegiance to Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, if verses 10–11 are read in the context of πνεῦμα possession, as suggested above, then one might also render διὰ Ἰησοῦ as "through Jesus," giving the preposition an instrumental function. Then Paul would say that he is "given over to death through Jesus," since his experience of "mortification" is essentially caused by being possessed by the "spirit" of Jesus Christ.

There remains an additional feature of 2 Cor 4:7–12 that is worth mentioning here, even though a full discussion of the general issues involved will have to wait until the final chapter. It is easy to note that the apostle uses the first person plural for most of the passage. Thus, the referent seems to be Paul himself throughout. That is certainly the case for the hardships catalogue, but the very intent of proposing Paul's experience and steadfastness as an object of imitation for the addressees surely pushes toward an inclusion of the Corinthians as well. The first person plural is maintained in verses 10–11 too, but verse 12 introduces a significant (and somewhat puzzling) variation. There the apostle explicitly opposes the first person linked to death to the second person linked to life (ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν, "death is at work in us, but life in you"). From this concluding verse it seems that Jesus's death is manifest and thus operative only in Paul, while the addressees have only the manifestation and the operation of Jesus's resurrected life through the mediation of the apostle.[79] However, Paul insists repeatedly in this and in other letters on the role that the πνεῦμα will have in communicating eternal life to the Christ believers and in transforming their bodies into resurrected (spiritual) bodies. Thus, it is difficult to imagine that the first person plural of verses 10–11 be limited to the apostle alone. For, if the "life of Jesus" will be manifested "in our mortal flesh," all Christ believers must also share in the process of being "given over to death" and of "carrying around the death of Jesus." Thomas Schmeller insightfully notes that a similar contrast seems also to stand behind 2 Cor 1:5–7.[80] In 1:5–6a it seems that Paul is experiencing the same sufferings and afflictions of Christ for the benefit (the "consolation" and the "salvation") of the addressees. There is here a notable use of the same interplay of personal pronouns as in 4:12.[81] But the immediately following

verses (6b–7) clearly point toward an extension of the actual sharing of the same sufferings also to the Corinthians.[82]

It would be easy to put together a long list of other passages from Paul's authentic letters in support of the proposal advanced here.[83] The experience of πνεῦμα possession was the primary means through which the historical figure of Christ was made present to Paul himself and to his groups. Such a *poiesis* of history had as its chief focus Christ's death and resurrection. Due to space limits, it might be better to comment briefly only on a well-known section from the Letter to the Galatians, a document that is rightly singled out as particularly representative by Christopher Mount as well.[84] Famously, the theme of making Christ's death present emerges in a powerful way in Gal 3:1:

> Ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ᾽ ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος;
>
> You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!

The critical discussion on this verse has focused largely on the most appropriate understanding of the verb προγράφω. This has sometimes been connected to the hypothetical earlier presentation by Paul of a Gospel or another similar written document to the Galatians. A few years ago, Basil Davis reexamined the issue and concluded that the best translation for the verb is the one quoted above, which gives due consideration to the aspect of "public exhibition" inherent in the word.[85] The same author has also shown that this presentation of Christ's crucifixion should not be taken merely as a vivid metaphor or as a reflection of Paul's extraordinary homiletic skills. In fact, the apostle is speaking of a "real" and concrete visual experience on the part of the Galatians (who have seen the crucified Jesus "with their own eyes").[86] Davis correctly observes that such a display must have been connected to the very body of Paul. Indeed, the apostle—a few lines before the invective of Gal 3:1—had just mentioned that he had been "crucified with Christ" (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι in 2:19) and that "now he does not live anymore, but Christ lives in him" (ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός in 2:20). Nevertheless, Davis too retreats—as we have seen above with respect to the exegesis of 2 Cor 4:7–12—and interprets the manifestation of Jesus's death in Paul's body as a veiled reference to the scars and sufferings resulting from the apostle's heroic missionary efforts. But Davis can do this only because he

conveniently forgets about another contextual element on which Paul lingers with great insistence, this time immediately after the invective. Indeed, in Gal 3:5 the apostle describes his first apostolic activity in Galatia in a way that establishes charismatic phenomena as its most important element.[87] Heidi Wendt has argued in a very impressive article that the verb προγράφω should be translated as "forewriting." Thus, it may indicate the charismatic mode of interpretation of the Jewish scriptures, from which Paul derived his information about the events of Jesus's life.[88] There is quite a lot to be commended in Wendt's proposal, including her effort to see Paul as a "freelance ritual expert" and to understand his treatment of Jewish textual prophecies as enlivened by the experience of the πνεῦμα. Nevertheless, Wendt seems to underestimate the charismatic context in which one encounters Gal 3:1 and consequently reduces the imagination of the reality behind Paul's verse in a way that is too textual and ultimately cognicentric.

Thus, it is appropriate to conclude—as one did above with respect to 2 Corinthians—that in all likelihood the manifestation of Jesus's crucifixion did take place in Paul's body through πνεῦμα possession. From that, it became a powerful and effective missionary tool. That pneumatic phenomena are an important theme behind Gal 3:1 is indirectly confirmed by Paul's insinuation that the Galatian Christ believers might be under an evil eye spell.[89] Even the famous reference—later in the letter, in Gal 6:17[90]—to the apostle's carrying the "marks" of Jesus in his own body can easily be read in this context. It is enough to consider Lambek's description of the *tromba* possession as it was summarized at the beginning of the present section. Those scholars who have suggested a theatrical element behind these passages from Galatians are not wrong either, as long as we do not think anachronistically of passion plays or of dramatic reenactments of the Gospels.[91] Indeed, an element of performance is inherent in all cases of spirit possession (so much so that Lambek can designate the mediums he has worked with as "artists"). But by observing such performative traits we should not feel legitimated to reach negative conclusions about the *reality* of spirit possession *qua* cultural phenomenon or about the *poiesis* of history that might take place through it.

These observations might prove useful to interpret more appropriately another passage of Galatians (4:13–14), in which Paul again recalls the circumstances of his first visit and missionary activity in the region:

13 Οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι᾽ ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ

ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or spit me out, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

Hans Dieter Betz has seen better than anyone else that possession might lurk behind this Pauline reminiscence.[92] For instance, the initial reference to an illness, which rationalistic exegetes have repeatedly tried to diagnose in biomedical terms (in parallel with 2 Cor 12, which will be discussed later), can be more adequately understood as the condition that is the common mark of possession. However, even Betz refrains from entertaining the idea that Paul himself might have been possessed, because this experience would have been allegedly incompatible with being an apostle.[93] Thus, Betz concludes that the Galatians could have misunderstood Paul's "weakness" as a sign of evil possession and could have then rejected his message by "spitting" at him, a common apotropaic gesture in the Mediterranean. But we have seen that the Pauline embodiment of the Christ πνεῦμα played a significant role in the evangelization of Galatia. Thus, it is much more probable that the Galatians did indeed recognize that Paul was possessed and not by a malevolent "spirit" but by the benevolent "spirit" of Christ. Thus, Paul praises his Galatian addressees because they were able to perform a good discernment of the "spirits." The reference to their welcoming him as Christ Jesus should be taken literally and not as a metaphor pointing at the apostle's preaching activity.

The present section has argued that πνεῦμα possession in Paul himself (and perhaps in his groups too), far from being a means to escape the burden of history, was a means to make history present through *poiesis*. Certainly Paul (and all the more so his Gentile converts) must have experienced being possessed by the "spirit" of Christ—a convicted and executed Jew—as a particularly striking and life-changing instance of clash with embodied Otherness. However, possession became for the apostle a remarkably productive experience, enlivening not only his missionary activity and his understanding of the past but also his theological reflection through its focus on Christ's death and resurrection. With this in mind, while Adolf Deissmann was right in pointing out that the πνεῦμα and Christ were the same for Paul, he was wrong in concluding that this identification implied a total neglect of the historical figure of Jesus on the apostle's part. On the contrary, one

can understand (with Lambek) that possession can convey a sense of history (*poiesis*) that is alternative to, but no less *real* than, the distantiation characteristic of the modern western tradition. Thus, it becomes clear that the Pauline Christ groups could have an equally *real* sense of the historicity of Jesus, despite their almost exclusive focus on his death and resurrection. The *poiesis* of these historical events entailed a few specific features, notably effecting their inscription in the very bodies of Paul (and likely also of his fellow believers) and generating a productive interaction with present circumstances through the performance of possession.

POSSESSION, MORAL AGENCY, AND SUBJECTIVITY

The preceding section has shown that πνεῦμα possession in the Pauline groups was in all likelihood a privileged means to cultivate a notion of temporality similar to that present in some possession cults. In part, this observation responds to a criticism that is sometimes mobilized against Pauline "mysticism" or "enthusiasm" on the grounds that the latter might have generated a neglect of the past and, in particular, a neglect of the figure of the historical Jesus. Alongside such a critique, traditional exegesis has faulted "charismatic" phenomena as being uninterested in moral reasoning and action. In regard to this, ethnographic literature on possession shows that in most cases the situation is actually the opposite and that in fact possession is a significant source of moral behavior as well as subjectivization. Thus, in the final section of the present chapter it is worth going back to the Pauline letters to see whether and in what forms πνεῦμα possession might have performed the same functions.

Indeed, the Pauline epistolary provides a rich selection of passages that are relevant for the discussion of the current topic. However, there is space only for the examination of a unit that can prove itself representative and can further the more theoretical goals of this analysis. The well-known cluster of verses at 1 Cor 6:12–20 comes from a letter in which Paul is usually seen as engaged in polemics against "enthusiastic" or "charismatic" opponents, whose fondness for pneumatic experiences has allegedly resulted in a moral relativism against which the apostle is reacting. Nevertheless, even a very cursory perusal of these verses shows that such a critical assessment is at the very least misleading:

> 12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.

13 Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will render inoperative both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said: "The two shall be one flesh." 17 But whoever is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against the body itself. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Halvor Moxnes has provided a particularly insightful Foucauldian reading of this important passage.[94] Among his many other significant observations, Moxnes has acknowledged that, while Paul is here making a moral point that most ancient thinkers would have shared, the reasoning behind it is quite distinctive. Indeed, the apostle does not undergird his opposition to sexual relationships with prostitutes through a divine commandment (as other Jewish authors would have done) or with the need to exercise one's emotional control (as other Greco-Roman philosophers would have done). In fact, Paul states twice that his moral instruction is grounded in the fact that his addressees' "bodies are members of Christ" (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστιν) in 6:15 and that their "body is a temple of the holy spirit" (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματός ἐστιν) in 6:19. As we have seen with respect to the notions of the "body of Christ" and of the indwelling of the spirit in believers, both of these ideas are clearly linked to πνεῦμα possession and the incorporation "in Christ" that is produced by it. As in other important Pauline passages, such a union between Christ believers and the πνεῦμα is conceived in radically physical and bodily terms. As a consequence, it is also exposed to very material threats coming from the outside. They could "corrupt" such a relationship and compromise the presence of the "spirit" within the believers.[95] In this perspective, possession is far from being an impulse to amoral behavior fostered by the misinterpretation of the Pauline message on the part of his "opponents." On the contrary, it becomes a privileged foundation for ethical reasoning and action in the very teaching of the apostle. That this

feature cannot be taken as a trait unique to πνεῦμα possession in Paul's Christ groups is confirmed by even a very cursory examination of the ethnographic literature. Thus, almost all the studies of possession cults report about constraints that are imposed by the "spirits" on their mediums and that have very concrete bodily and social implications. For the already mentioned *tromba* possession, Lambek describes in detail the requirements that mediums must observe in choosing their dress or in avoiding eating the specific foods that their respective royal "spirits" ate on the day of their death.[96] Indeed, these are the means through which possession is made present in the life of mediums well beyond the actual moments of manifestation of the "spirits." Thus, one can legitimately speak with Lambek of possession as a source of ordinary ethics and of the formation of specific subjectivities for possessed individuals.[97] For instance, Adeline Masquelier gives a very compelling account of the West African *bori* "spirits" and of their heavy impositions on their mediums.[98] If such requests, which can be interpreted as expressions of resistance to Islam as well as to modernity (for instance, through the prohibition of riding cars), are not met, the "spirits" can retaliate by causing illnesses in their chosen mediums[99] or even by abandoning them altogether.

The mention of subjectivity reminds us of what has been observed above with reference to the negotiated nature of Jesus's possession in the Beelzebul episode. Moxnes also highlights something similar with respect to 1 Cor 6:12–20. He notes that one of the main subtexts of the pericope is that the Corinthians are not in complete possession of their bodies. Their bodies cannot convey their identities immediately or unquestionably.[100] Moxnes concludes that the entire moral instruction and the ascetic project enshrined in 1 Cor 6:12–20 depend on the original experience of incorporation: "the bodies of Christian men in Corinth were determined by being 'members of Christ.' [. . .] *First* came their inclusion into the body of Christ, so that their bodies became part of Christ's body. *Then,* as a consequence, came asceticism in the form of their renunciation of other bodily unions."[101] But what has been illustrated so far in this chapter demonstrates that the experience of incorporation depended originally on the experience of πνεῦμα possession. Anthropological studies show that it is indeed in possession that a new subjectivity is negotiated and constructed through the traumatic experience of limited agency accompanied by the empowering presence of the "spirits."[102]

After all, Paul himself indicates time and again in his authentic letters that his possession on the part of the Christ πνεῦμα produced such a form of subjectivity. For instance, one can look at the already examined case of Gala-

tians. In the letter scholars often highlight the extraordinary statement that Paul does not live any more, but the crucified Christ lives "in him" (Gal 2:20). Such a formula refers back almost to the very beginning of the letter and to the short biographical account of the circumstances in which the apostle was singled out by God to reveal his son "in himself," to proclaim the son's good news among the peoples (Gal 1:16).[103] As seen in the preceding section, the manifestation of the Christ πνεῦμα in Paul through possession constitutes a powerful missionary tool. However, in 1 Cor 6 as in Gal 2 one can see that it is also a decisive factor in the formation of the apostle's subjectivity as a possessed individual.[104]

Again Moxnes, in commenting on 1 Cor 6:12–20, notes how the new subjectivity introduced by Paul is described. The apostle employs images that have to do with sexuality (in the equation between male Christ believers' relationships with prostitutes and with Christ) and slavery (at the very end of the pericope where the apostle reminds his addressees that they have been bought "at a price"). In both cases, such choices on the part of Paul generate unusual representational effects with respect to the ideology of the audience of free males to whom the instruction seems primarily to be addressed. As far as the present theme of πνεῦμα possession is concerned, however, the use of imagery drawn from the areas of sexuality or slavery cannot surprise. Both sexuality and slavery are widely employed cross-culturally as idioms to express the emotional and affective power of possession experiences together with their unique combination of traumatic curtailing of individual agency and of subjective empowerment. Something similar has been observed in the first chapter when discussing the significance of political imagery in the description of Jesus's subjectivity as a possessed exorcist. In this regard it might be helpful to turn to Albert Harrill, who has provided a very valuable assessment of the Pauline use of slavery images and idioms in relationship with the self.[105] Harrill correctly identifies slavery imagery as a particularly apt resource "to think with" about the psychologically and socially traumatic experience of becoming members of Christ groups. But the present analysis demonstrates that there is something more behind Paul's fondness for representing himself and his fellow Christ believers as enslaved persons. Such a hypothesis can be strengthened by referring to the employment of slavery imagery to reflect upon spirit possession that has been observed in the preceding chapter in discussing the *Shepherd* of Hermas. The case of Hermas and its ambivalent relationship with Paul's tradition on this point indicates that such a use of slavery images was not an idiosyncratic choice of the apostle. Indeed, it seems

that such images may convey better than others the nature of the experiences connected with a possessed subjectivity and with its ambiguous form of freedom, consisting in moving from subjection to the demonic power of Sin to subjection to a divine πνεῦμα.[106]

This complex form of subjectivity is nowhere more evident than in the famously difficult autobiographical passage of 2 Cor 12:1–10. Here Paul describes first the experience of "a person" (arguably to be identified with the apostle himself), who had been taken to the "third heaven" and had heard "unutterable" or "ineffable words" (ἄρρητα ῥήματα) there.[107] Paul confabulates here in the terms of a heavenly journey located in the cultural and literary apocalyptic tradition. But the phenomenon that stood behind the confabulation should be recognized as "ecstasy" or, better, trance brought about by possession.[108] Such a hypothesis is supported by Paul's mention that the experience took place "in Christ" (the phrase repeatedly employed by the apostle to indicate possession by the Christ πνεῦμα) and by his putting the entire account (in v. 1) under the heading of "visions and revelations of the Lord" (ὀπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου). In the latter phrase the mention of Christ as "the Lord" should be construed—with the majority of the exegetes—as a subjective genitive to signify that Paul understands Christ as the author of these revelations, since they were the results of instances of possession by the Christ πνεῦμα.[109]

Most interestingly, in verses 7–9 the apostle moves on to retelling an experience of an altogether opposite nature, this time explicitly connected to himself:

> 7 Διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. 8 Ὑπὲρ τούτου τρὶς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ· 9 καὶ εἴρηκέν μοι· Ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

> 7 Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn [or a stake] was given to me in the flesh, an angel of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, so that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me: "My benefit is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

The correct interpretation of the mysterious "thorn in the flesh" of Paul has been a recurrent subject of exegetical controversies since antiquity. The

Church Fathers favored sexual temptation, and more modern authors prefer either a demonic or a human opposition to the apostle's missionary enterprise.[110] In recent times, the notion that Paul might have suffered of a biomedical ailment has gained traction, both because of the rationalizing tendencies of modern exegetes and because of an increased sensitivity in biblical studies about disability. Most recently, developing an earlier suggestion of Max Krenkel,[111] Adela Yarbro Collins has proposed to identify the "thorn" as an illness involving seizures, possibly a form of epilepsy. In particular, Krenkel and Collins read 2 Cor 12:7–9 in parallel with Gal 4:12–14, a passage that has been examined above and in which Paul mentions a "weakness" as the original cause of his missionary activity in Galatia.

The parallel highlighted by Collins is impressive, but one might wonder—as done already above for Gal 4:13–14—whether it is really appropriate to read the passage at hand only in terms of a biomedical ailment.[112] On this point, Abernathy has noted that exegetes tend to take both the phrases "thorn in the flesh" and "messenger (angel) of Satan" as purely metaphorical.[113] However, it seems highly unlikely that the apostle expressed himself in a completely metaphorical way without giving any explicit referent. Thus, since the "thorn in the flesh" is almost certainly a metaphor, the reference to the "angel of Satan" ought to be taken literally. Moreover, consistent with what has been said above with respect to Gal 4:13–14 and 2 Cor 12:1–4, verses 7–9 also in all likelihood refer to πνεῦμα possession. To be sure, the "thorn in the flesh" may still be considered an ailment, of the kind that precedes and regularly accompanies possession. Indeed, there is actually no contradiction in taking the "angel of Satan" as a literal reference.[114] As shown recently by Lisa Bowens,[115] Paul casts the reference in an apocalyptic military scenario that is not at all uncommon—as we have seen before—for descriptions of possession. Once more the text hints at the theme of discernment of the "spirits," in this case showing that Paul himself had been able to recognize that one of the "spirits" possessing him (alongside the Christ "spirit") could not be benevolent and that as such—if God had allowed it—it should have been exorcized.[116] In 2 Cor 12:1–10 the apostle juxtaposes this instance of "failed" possession to that of a "successful" ecstasy (the visit to the third heaven). The juxtaposition creates a rhetorical structure that takes advantage of such an ambiguous condition to advance Paul's overall point against boasting in the service of Christ's message.[117] This interesting example of "failed" possession, however opaque it may be in its brevity and obscurity, significantly expands and complicates our

understanding of the ways in which the experience of possession contributed to shaping Paul's subjectivity.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

The present chapter has attended to the social and ethical functions of the religious experience of possession in the Pauline groups. The chapter shows that some "constructive" traits of possession are recognizable in the Pauline Christ groups. Particular attention has been given to the forms in which possession enables a specific *poiesis* (in Michael Lambek's words) of the past. The sense of temporality underlying such an experience is remarkably different from the archival and academic study of history typical of western modernity. Through his very embodiment of the πνεῦμα of Christ, Paul (and arguably the other members of his groups) could make the person of Christ *present* in a way that affectively and effectively informed not only their remembrance of and interaction with the past but also their moral agency and even their subjectification as Christ believers.

"Will They Not Say That You Are Out of Your Mind?"

THE PERFORMANCE OF POSSESSION

This final chapter will deal more closely with the performative nature of possession, since this phenomenon's effectiveness and validity is constantly generated and supported through a triangular negotiation involving mediums, "spirits," and their audiences. Such a negotiation spills beyond the boundaries of the performance *per se* to inform conversations among practitioners and participants that, in turn, contribute to the construction of identities, forms of authority, and social structures. The chapter will attend closely to the argument developed by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 as an instance of this negotiation about the "correct" performance of a possession ritual.

In order to decenter the figure of Paul as much as possible, the three chapters will be read with an eye on the possibility of reconstructing the "voice" of the Corinthians behind the apostle's rhetoric in this dialogue. Paul emphasized the importance of intelligibility for the revelations uttered in a state of possession (pointing eventually to their cognitive contents and his own apostolic authority) with a devaluation of *glossolalia* as the divine "language of angels" or "spirits." On the contrary, other voices within the Corinthian group(s) might have understood unintelligibility and heteroglossia as the distinctive indicator of a "real" presence of the Christ *pneuma* in and among them.

POSSESSION AS PERFORMANCE

As has been noted by many anthropologists from the very beginning of its modern ethnographic study, possession can be fruitfully conceptualized as a performative act. Some well-known scholars such as Michael Lambek have gone as far as to designate possessed individuals, whom they have encountered and worked with, as "artists." Obviously, the latter description should not be taken in a disparaging sense (as has unfortunately happened in some earlier attempts at the ethnography of possession). It does not indicate that possession should fundamentally be considered a "fake," designed to deceive its audiences. On the contrary, as argued by Sarah Goldingay in a series of important studies, the similarity between possession and theater runs deeper and is much more meaningful. For it would be an impoverishing trivialization to consider all actors on a stage as deceivers of their publics, when they literally strive to embody characters that must be far more than mere literary inventions. Likewise, the truth of possession is built on much more than mere deception or the misguided expectations of gullible audiences.[1] Thus, performance studies have by now a solid and well-grounded place within the anthropological study of possession and exorcism.[2] They enable scholars to grasp more effectively the collective dynamics that are at the very foundation of all instances of possession. Indeed, the effectiveness of any case of possession is built on a triangular exchange involving the possessed individual, the "spirit," and—most importantly, from a performative point of view—the audience. The latter's role is not at all passive, as has been shown repeatedly in the opening chapters of this book. A successful possession (and also a successful exorcism) is produced through the establishment of a virtuous tension between the expectations of the audience and the ability of the possessed individual (or of the exorcist) to play with cultural scripts and idioms. As seen in previous chapters, this is the procedure through which an illness can be diagnosed as a "natural" ailment or as a supernatural occurrence in need of exorcistic intervention. Likewise, the participation of an audience is of paramount importance in the identification of the possessing "spirit," a decisive step toward the establishment of a more formalized "relationship" with it or toward its casting away through appropriate exorcisms. In this perspective, one can understand Lambek's designation of possessed individuals as "artists." The defining feature is their ability to respect the cultural expectations, which are well known to their audiences, and at the same time to modify them both playfully and seriously by embodying them. Thus, the performative aspect of

possession can be rightly understood as the trait that more than anything else constitutes the value of this phenomenon. In sum, it makes it a repository of a given group's historical and cultural patrimony and an opportunity for the production of change and innovation.

The study of possessions as performances, which is flourishing among anthropologists and ethnographers, encounters obvious problems when we try to transfer it to the critical analysis of the early Christ groups. Indeed, most of the observations made by anthropologists are—as usual—enhanced by the invaluable opportunity of witnessing firsthand the events and rituals. The entire process is much more complicated and methodologically dangerous when one addresses the phenomenon of spirit possession in the early Christ groups, since whatever we know about them is necessarily mediated through textual sources. In this perspective, the present problem falls under the general methodological challenge of this entire project: trying to employ meaningfully and carefully the results of contemporary ethnographic observations for a better understanding of ancient religious phenomena. However, it is safe to say that the attempt to study possession *qua* performance does indeed carry an additional burden. Indeed, the negotiation that takes place in a performance is by its very nature a fleeting and ever-changing phenomenon, which can be appreciated in full only through the direct observation of discrete occurrences.

That being said, there are a few specific circumstances (both methodological and connected to the specific shape of the ancient materials at our disposal) that might alleviate the problems. First of all, the most recent performative analyses of rituals (and possession rituals, in particular) have increasingly shown that an exclusive focus on the event *per se* ultimately fails to grasp some important (one could even say, essential) aspects of a ritual *qua* performance. Thus, for instance, Kristina Wirtz—in her important ethnographic treatment of the ritual activity of Cuban *santeros*—aptly observes that the effectiveness and the "truth" of possessions is always a matter of negotiation among several involved parties. Such a negotiation is not exclusively limited to the moments of the actual ritual but effectively spills over into discussions and examinations among experts and participants before and after each possession event.[3] Similar considerations lead Sarah Goldingay to use the label "performance" in two distinct, but partially overlapping, ways: on the one hand, narrowly (and more consistently with the "normal" understanding of the word) "to describe an event and a process, rather than a fixed object of analysis; that is to say, the respondent's enactment of embodied processes set apart in time and space where the audience and actor directly interact." But then Goldingay feels the

need to have at her disposal a more capacious definition of "performance." In this case—on the other hand—the term functions "as an organizing concept that includes the performers' expectations and their personal narratives, their performance training and emotional responses, in addition to the events' surrounding and constructing ideological contexts." For Goldingay, such an additional nuance would enable observers to make the most of "the term's ability to describe something that is not inside or outside a given temporal boundary, but a continuum of creative exchange and influence."[4]

Without by any means discarding the potential value of the first definition advanced by Goldingay, the second nuance provides a particularly rich and fruitful backdrop for the study of the early Christ movement's texts devoted to possession rituals. Indeed, these texts offer a relatively ample and diverse record of discussions concerning the "truth" and effectiveness of possession. Through them one can glean specifically performers' expectations, performance training, and ideological contexts. The critical examination of these writings enables one to see that—for these ancient Christ groups—the construction of "correctedness" in rituals of possession participated (actually, was a fundamental constitutive component) in the definition of crucial matters of authority and identity. Once more, the practice of possession reveals itself as a crucial locale in which cultural scripts are embodied and thus reinscribed, contested, and negotiated.

These initial methodological considerations lead one to consider a second advantage of a performative approach to the study of the literature on possession rituals in the early Christ movement. As it is well known, in general our information on the ritual practices of the early Christ groups is lacunose at best. This is a problem that has forever hindered scholars interested in the history of Christian liturgy in their genealogical attempts to trace the "original" (and thus by definition normative) forms of sacramental rites, such as baptism and eucharist.[5] Interestingly, however, one can safely say that possession rituals constitute a significant exception within such a bleak picture. And this holds true even though—for obvious reasons that are linked to their lack of prominence in the later life of Christian churches—rulings and discussions on "true" and "false" forms of possession have attracted far less attention on the part of liturgists. We could even say that—given the relative intensity with which writers belonging to the Christ movement happen to discuss and actually polemicize on possession—the latter must have played a much more significant role in their groups' life and self-definition than baptisms or com-

munal meals did. Regardless of what one makes of this issue, which certainly falls beyond the scope of the present treatment, such a state of affairs leads one to recognize that a study of possession rituals provides a much more promising starting point than other, more popular subject matters in the history of liturgy.[6]

Moreover, besides the sheer wealth of texts, one has the fortuitous opportunity of looking at writings that record arguments—and sometimes even polemical discussions—revolving around the topic of "spirit" possession. Such a state of affairs might even enable one to go a step further by joining traditional historical analysis with the insights of ethnographic writing on possession. We could go beyond the polemical scenarios constructed by authorial voices to imagine how actual possession rituals were variously practiced, contested, and negotiated within the early Christ groups.

In the following pages the analysis will be focused on one text, which is more prominent in the record of the early Christ movement both because of its relative length and because of its dating. These are the three chapters devoted to prophecy and glossolalia by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14. For the theoretical reasons that have been illustrated above, this examination will center on the issue of ritual performance. The intent will be to show how this text can yield important information on the ways in which possession was a communal event within the Christ groups. Moreover, we will attend the question of how the "success" or "failure" of the ritual was assessed within the mutually engaging triangle formed by possessed individuals, "spirits," and their audiences. The 1 Cor 12–14 extract lends itself particularly well to such an analysis. Indeed, Paul clearly seems to have intended the three chapters as pieces designed to reflect on and advocate for the features that could render any given instance of possession either a "success" or a "failure." Even if that was the original stimulus behind the composition of 1 Cor 12–14, however, the resulting texts in turn reveal how even such an early construction of ritual authority had to be built on the basis of a negotiation. The latter involved, besides the apostle, at a bare minimum, communal expectations and the particularly fleeting will of the "spirits." As Christopher Mount puts it with admirable clarity: "From the perspective of Paul's communities as cults of spirit possession, the rhetoric of Paul's letters is an attempt to construct this dialectic of knowledge in such way that the individual possessed by a spirit (in this case Paul) authenticates his or her authority in dialogue with a community that acknowledges that authority."[7] This analysis will show once more the cultural

and social wealth of meanings that groups as well as individuals attached to the experience of possession.

P O S S E S S I O N   I N   1   C O R   1 2 – 1 4 ?

The three chapters considered here have received an enormous amount of scholarly attention through the years. In particular chapter 13, which contains the very well-known Pauline "hymn to love," has been repeatedly worked on, even though the remaining materials have certainly attracted exegetes and interpreters far less than other sections within this important letter. In part, this relative lack of attention might be due to the very topic addressed by the apostle here. The charismatic phenomena that Paul tentatively (and rather confusingly) treats in this section of the epistle have not become part of or-dinary life in modern Christian churches, at least not at the level of official dogmatics and sacramental doctrine. Thus, exegetes and scholars in general, whose interest in the early Christ movement has been variously connected to ecclesial agendas, have found it easier to pay less attention to them. This has happened, even though it does not seem that "charismatic" phenomena played a lesser role in the groups' life than, for instance, communal meals, about which Paul speaks rather briefly in chapter 11. That being said, the first important issue to tackle here concerns the identification of the phe-nomena featured in 1 Cor 12–14 as "possession" (as the term has been defined throughout the preceding chapters). Again, traditional scholarship devoted to these three chapters has worked with a definition of "possession" informed by the entirely negative view of Christian dogmatics. On such a basis, it is obvious that what Paul describes in more or less positive terms cannot be easily associated with a malignant takeover of a human self that needs to be healed through some form of exorcism. The ethnographic and histori-cal literature mentioned in the introduction and throughout the preceding chapters yields an understanding of "possession" that is remarkably different. This would hold true not only for the contemporary cultures described by anthropologists but also for the majority of ancient, medieval, and even mod-ern Christianity in Europe. In this perspective, "possession" can be under-stood as a "positive" cultural phenomenon, not necessarily in need of healing or exorcizing. For instance, "possession" appears as something generative of moral reasoning and communal life. These are exactly some of the elements that are connected to possession in other chapters in 1 Corinthians and in other Pauline letters in particular. Thus, it would not be surprising to envisage

possession behind charismatic phenomena also in 1 Cor 12–14, in which the construction of communal life of the Corinthian Christ groups is indeed the main subject of discussion.

But is there any textual indication that prophecy and speaking in tongues (glossolalia) as they are described by Paul can be considered the products of "possession"? As we have seen in the introduction, the modern terminology of "possession" is almost entirely absent from the early Christ sources. Indeed, the very language of "possession" is evidently a modern lexical and categorical creation with very little correspondence in ancient materials. As such, it has been retained in the present study mostly in order to avoid confusion for the reader. It also enables to draw a connection with contemporary ethnographies in which "possession" is a widely used term, even though it should be understood according to the "positive" paradigm recalled above.

However, it is exactly through this kind of controlled comparison that one can detect—under a different and non-systematic terminology—the presence in ancient sources of the cultural and religious phenomenon that modern ethnographers call "possession." A very important, albeit small, example of such textual evidence is the use—common to Paul and to the Synoptic Gospels—of the otherwise quite obscure phrase "in Christ" or "in an impure spirit." We have seen in the preceding chapters that this terminology, spread through several arguably unrelated early Christ sources, seems to depend on a very early linguistic use. Likewise, since the same phrase is employed to indicate possession by both the Christ πνεῦμα and by "evil spirits," it is clear that it indicates an ambiguous and complex phenomenon. Later Christian theological elaboration has created a sharp distinction. There the term "possession" was reserved only for "negative" instances exemplified primarily by the Gospel episodes in which Jesus "heals" several characters possessed by evil or impure spirits. But an examination of the sources supported by controlled cultural comparison and by a less biased textual reading reveals that ancient Christ groups and authors did not envisage an essential distinction between these varieties of "possession" phenomena. Indeed, as ethnographers have repeatedly noticed in several different cultural contexts, "possession" is—at its inception—a particularly ambiguous event. It requires the mobilization of sophisticated interpretive and ritual tools in order to ascertain whether a given case should be treated as "negative" or "positive." It goes without saying that different cultures have produced different taxonomies of "possession," often much more elaborate and meaningful than the simple negative/positive binary. However, the binary is significant inasmuch as it provides guidelines

to understand which cases should be "healed" through various forms of exorcism and which ones should be instead cultivated. Indeed, the latter might provide the possessed individual and her group with beneficial effects. There is little doubt—from what has been seen in the previous chapters—that the same situation obtained within the early Christ groups as well. "Possession" as a form of religious experience was a cornerstone of group life and—as we will see soon enough with reference to 1 Cor 12–14—it was even sought out by members of the early Christ movement. Obviously, as in other cultural contexts, not all instances of "possession" were deemed "positive" or beneficial for the group. Thus, great effort had to be spent in adjudicating whether a given case could be designated as acceptable or in need of healing through exorcism.

Against the interpretive background sketched so far, we can come back to our original question concerning the possibility of finding "possession" behind the long treatment offered by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14. As noted above, traditional exegesis has denied this option. The main reason is that the apostle would not have used the terminology of "possession" in these three chapters, because he did instead refer to "prophecy" or "glossolalia." While the latter point is certainly true, a more precise textual analysis shows that the issue is more complex.[8]

A telling example is evident already in the opening lines of chapter 12. Here Paul begins a new section of his discussion by employing a textual signpost that occurs also elsewhere in the same letter. The apostle states that he is going to inform his addressees about the issue of "the spiritual ones" (περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν in v. 1). This is something that Paul has done at the beginning of other sections of the letter when touching on a series of themes that are apparently unrelated. Such signposts, according to many readers, should be taken as replies to questions raised by the Corinthians themselves in previous exchanges.

For the purposes of the current discussion it will be useful to keep in mind that such an opening puts all the three following chapters under the label "spiritual individuals/gifts." "Spiritual individuals," if that is indeed what Paul means here, would indicate not people who are ontologically "spiritual"—as opposed to "material" or something analogous—but people who are somehow connected to the πνεῦμα. Scholars have long debated whether Paul is referring here to "the spiritual people" (masculine) or "the spiritual things/charismata" (neuter), since both possibilities are legitimate for a genitive plural like this. The choice on this matter entails mostly theological distinctions,

but it is worth noting that perhaps Paul left the phrase vague on purpose. Indeed, he will speak not only about "individuals" or "charismata" over the next three chapters, but also about the entire "operation" of the interactions between human mediums and "spirits" in a ritualized context. Thus, one might be tempted to prefer translations such as *Wirkungen des Geistes*,[9] which refers back to Gunkel's seminal work on this topic, or even "Spiritism," as suggested by Clint Tibbs.[10]

That being said, it is also important to note that right after this initial statement Paul moves almost immediately to discuss how one should evaluate which charismatic utterances should be taken as valid and which should be rejected. The apostle employs a contrastive parallelism whose terminology deserves to be examined carefully in light of what has been said above (1 Cor 12:3):

> Διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει· Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν· Κύριος Ἰησοῦς εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

> Therefore, I let you know that no one—speaking *in* a spirit of God— says "Jesus is a curse," and that no one can say "Jesus is lord" if not *in* a holy spirit.

The parallelism developed by Paul is not perfect insofar as he is not interested here in mapping all the possible statements that could be uttered by someone speaking *in* whatsoever type of πνεῦμα. What really interests the apostle is to establish a criterion that will enable him and the Corinthians to adjudicate whether a given utterance originates from a trustworthy source or not.

Paul will develop this reasoning throughout the rest of chapters 12–14. For the time being, verse 12:3 enables one to make two significant observations. First, when Paul describes the situation in which the two statements are uttered, he is employing the same terminology that we have identified—in his letters and in other textual products of the early Christ movement—as indicators of "possession." This is similar to what has been noted above with respect to Paul's use of the ἐν Χριστῷ formula or of the synoptic Gospels' references to "being *in* an impure πνεῦμα." Likewise, here the apostle writes about "being *in* a πνεῦμα of God" and "being *in* a holy πνεῦμα." Thus, one should conclude that Paul envisages these two statements as being uttered in a state that we should call "possession," analogous to what we have seen in the preceding chapters. The apostle's point is that some types of utterances cannot

come from a possessing πνεῦμα related to the divine. As a consequence, one can look at the content of such utterances in order to discern whether the medium is speaking under the control of a divine πνεῦμα or not. This kind of revelatory role is often performed in possession phenomena cross-culturally. Thus, it seems eminently reasonable to imagine that also the event presupposed by Paul here does belong to the same category.

The second preliminary observation that can be offered on the basis of what Paul says in 1 Cor 12:3 is that he clearly envisages a multiplicity of "spirits." These can possess individual human beings even within the confines of the Christ group. It is often noted (and is a matter of great critical and theological dispute) that the apostle does not use definite articles for what he calls "πνεῦμα of God" or "holy πνεῦμα." Paul wants to make the point that *only* with *a* divine spirit can a human being proclaim the lordship of Jesus. But the unspoken assumption is that there might be several "divine spirits" that can bring someone to utter even an acceptable statement. A majority of the contemporary exegeses of Paul's letter have had trouble with this conclusion because it naturally implies that the apostle did not have a notion of a single "holy spirit." Indeed, "*the* Holy Spirit" became codified only in later theological reflection as the third divine person of the Christian Trinity. The absence of a definite article in Pauline references to "a holy spirit" is however not a singular and idiosyncratic feature of 1 Cor 12:3; it also reappears elsewhere in the epistolary of the apostle.[11] As a consequence, several later scribes and copyists of those letters that became part of the canon have added definite articles here and in other passages in order to bring their Pauline text in line with the new developments of orthodox doctrine. While this is a common phenomenon in the textual transmission of biblical texts, it is important to emphasize its occurrence here, because it underscores the different approach held by Paul with respect to these issues.[12] It is nevertheless true, as we have observed in the preceding chapters, that the apostle envisaged Christ as a particularly important πνεῦμα. In all likelihood, this happened because the Christ πνεῦμα was invested with a specific role in the creation of the Christ groups and in the mission to those individuals who were going to become their members. In this perspective, it is possible that for Paul himself—as we have seen again above—having a very specific and strong relationship with the Christ πνεῦμα played a significant role in his conception of divinity.

That being said, however, it is equally clear that the apostle knew about the existence of other "spirits" and that some of these—sometimes also some of the "evil ones"—could happen to possess even members of the Christ group.

That is clear perhaps for Paul himself in 2 Cor 12 if one follows the interpretation of the famous passage regarding the "thorn in the flesh" proposed at the end of chapter 4. Paul certainly had charismatic experiences that strengthened his allegiance to the Christ movement and even widened his knowledge of the supernatural world. However, he is also admitting in 2 Corinthians to be subject to possession on the part of a "spirit" (the "Satan") that is unequivocally negative. Paul asked God—albeit unsuccessfully—to be freed from such "spirit" through some form of exorcism. Thus, one should understand the phenomena described by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 as "possession," analogous to what he has in mind elsewhere in his letters, mostly with reference to himself. Then it becomes quite clear that the same situation is envisaged in the three chapters examined here, with the significant difference that now the experience of "possession" is portrayed as a communal phenomenon affecting all or most of the Christ group members. The very ambiguous nature of possession, however, explains why Paul's focus in this treatment is on the complex task of "discerning" what "spirits" are worth retaining and what should instead be exorcized.

DISCERNMENT OF THE "SPIRITS"

In the preceding section, we have seen that in 1 Cor 12–14 Paul is concerned with "possession" in a vein similar to his treatments of the same subject occurring elsewhere in his epistolary. The main difference that characterizes these three chapters is that the focus of the apostle's attention moves away from his own experience of possession to the broader context of the group of Christ believers.

In chapters 12–14 Paul deals with an issue that—as we have already seen in the first chapter on the problem raised by Beelzebul's relationship with Jesus—is of great significance for any case of possession. Several ethnographic accounts as well as historical records attest that a delicate moment in any instance of possession is the "emergence" of the phenomenon. At that juncture, the case manifests itself in all its power, but it is still fairly difficult to adjudicate. This is also the crucial moment in which most possession events start to be played out in a performative way. Indeed, the final adjudication is the result of the above-mentioned triangular interplay among the "spirit," the possessed individual, and an audience. Such a triangulation stood behind the Gospel story of Jesus and Beelzebul, since—from the moment of "emergent" possession forward—the path is open to several different results.

The process of adjudication and negotiation can end up in many mutually exclusive places, including that of "positive" possession, "negative" possession in need of exorcism, or even the acknowledgement that the matter is not one of possession at all but is rather a more "natural" form of illness (which is obviously articulated differently in culturally different healthcare contexts).

The moment of "emergent" possession is not, however, the only one in which the triangular negotiation and adjudication of the "performance" of possession is carried out. As noted in the first pages of this chapter with reference to Kristina Wirtz's analysis of Santería rituals, the issue is constantly on the minds of practitioners and participants. As long as possession is a repeated "performance" carried out in a ritual context, the triangular negotiation is necessary to assure the validity of each event and even of the ongoing possession. Thus, Wirtz can show how the conversation spills beyond the boundaries of the ritual taken *per se* and becomes a continuous flow, in which parameters and adjudication points are constantly moved and reevaluated. The text of 1 Cor 12–14 should be considered part of a similarly ongoing conversation. The three chapters address what renders a possession ritual valid and who has the authority to establish the parameters on whose basis such judgment can be passed in a reliable manner. A significant limitation of this approach is that in these three chapters one has only a single snapshot of the ongoing conversation and, to add even more complexity to the critical task, one can hear only one voice.

Several authoritative scholars in recent years have drawn our attention to the risks entailed in focusing too exclusively on this single voice, Paul's voice. The attendant result is that the arguments developed by the apostle end up being "heroized," leading to a net loss of the multivocality and plurality that characterized the life of these ancient Christ groups.[13] Because we have established above that 1 Cor 12–14 should be read as part of an ongoing conversation that is otherwise lost, the need to be careful on this crucial methodological point becomes all the more significant. Traditional scholarship has already struggled valiantly with this issue, and some paths out of the conundrum have been suggested. For a time, a very popular approach to this issue was that of "mirror-reading" the opponents of Paul through a systematic reversal of the positions and arguments expounded by the apostle in his own letters.[14] The shortcomings inherent in such an interpretive method are readily apparent. For one thing, "mirror-reading" does little to reduce the "heroization" of Paul that is so often and appropriately lamented by critical scholars. Moreover, the very act of understanding the potential "other" voices behind

the apostle's epistolary as "opponents" ends up caging these voices in an antagonistic pattern that is ultimately rather uncritical. Indeed, to conceive of interlocutors of Paul as merely "opponents" is tantamount to adopting at face value the often polemical and blistering rhetoric deployed by the apostle in almost all his writings. A properly critical approach to these texts should instead—at a minimum—prove itself able to imagine "other" voices as not necessarily engaged in an agonistic contest with Paul. They might instead be participants in a conversation in which some fundamental elements are shared and agreed upon.

The case examined here lends itself to a reading informed by different paradigms than those that have often dominated the hermeneutics of 1 Cor 12–14. In most traditional readings, for instance, Paul is presented as advocating a complete abandonment of charismatic phenomena. Exegetes claim that he would have judged them fundamentally irrational and thus inadequate to express true allegiance to the Gospel. This stance is apparent, for example, in Conzelmann's classic commentary on 1 Corinthians.[15] Many have noted that such an opinion is reminiscent of the conditions of modern German Lutheranism more than of what can be read in Pauline texts or what we know about the socio-cultural situation of the Corinthian Christ group.[16] Indeed, we can see here another telling example of how the unconscious adoption of modern European paradigms of the self and of its relationship with "spiritual" beings leads to a significant misunderstanding of ancient documents. In particular, in order to paint the Corinthians as "opposing" the rationalizing and modernizing efforts of Paul, authors such as Conzelmann have to invent an "ecstatic" pagan background for the Christ believers of Corinth. Thus, their "disorderly" passion for charismatic and enthusiastic phenomena can turn out to be a residual connection to their pre-conversion past that the apostle is at pains to dispel and refine.[17]

It is easy to see in the texts themselves that a plain reading yields a picture vastly different from the one in which Paul so closely resembles a devout Lutheran pastor from nineteenth-century Germany. In fact, an element that is very evident in the three chapters examined here is that the apostle never denies the positive role that charismatic phenomena have within the life of a Christ group. And he does this even as he maintains a polemical stance throughout this entire section of the letter. There are plenty of indications that the apostle considered charismatic phenomena as foundational for both his own life "in Christ" and for that of the other members of the group. Christopher Mount—in a dense but also convincing article—has made this point.[18]

Mount concludes, speaking of possession as we have been doing here and in the previous chapters, that "possession phenomena in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 are not an aberration of Pauline religion, or unique to Corinth."[19] Indeed, even within 1 Cor 12–14 there are several passages that can be invoked to support such a conclusion. A very straightforward one occurs immediately after the opening verses of 1 Cor 12 that have been examined above. In verses 4–11 Paul goes in succession through an astonishing array of diverse gifts that are granted, according to the apostle, by God through the action of one and the same "spirit." The verse that concludes this section (1 Cor 12:11) is quite explicit in conveying how beneficial the influence of this "spirit" is for the members of the group: πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται ("All these are activated by one and the same spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the spirit chooses").

In sum, Paul must hold a fundamentally positive opinion on the value that Christ groups can derive from speaking in tongues. Indeed, he thanks God for having given that same gift to him too, and he is stating rather hyperbolically that he could practice it much more than the Corinthians do (1 Cor 14:18). Again, Christopher Mount notes that such a positive predisposition is only natural, since it is indeed through the display of possession that Paul has led the Corinthians and the members of other groups into their allegiance to Christ.[20]

Thus, the issue discussed by the apostle in the three chapters is definitely not whether it might be appropriate for a Christ group to cultivate charismatic gifts, which we can legitimately call "possession" at this point. On the contrary, the importance of possession phenomena in establishing and nurturing communal life for these groups can be considered an assumption shared both by Paul and his addressees. As many scholars have noted in their analyses of 1 Cor 12–14, the argumentative point that the apostle tries to drive home here is of a different nature but builds on the assumptions illustrated above. Indeed, even though possession can be beneficial and productive, there are cases in which it turns out to be the exact opposite. As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, this is a very common occurrence in almost all cases of possession. The way to sort out the notorious ambiguity of the emergent phenomenon is to "discern" the nature of the "spirit" involved in each case that presents itself to the attention of a given group. It goes without saying that "discernment" requires a set of criteria. But even when these are well established through codification and ritualization, there always remains an element of improvisation and flexibility—inherent to the cultural perfor-

mance of possession—that cannot be eliminated. This produces an always variable amount of negotiation among the parties involved. Thus, the main argumentative point of 1 Cor 12–14 should be identified in Paul's effort to negotiate criteria that would help the Christ groups in their recurrent task of understanding when an instance of possession might be considered beneficial and when a given performance of possession might be judged valid.

On this crucial point Paul's opinion clearly diverged to some extent from that of his addressees. This is evident from the amount of rhetorical energy that the apostle has to spend over the three chapters in order to sketch out a set of recognizable criteria. In this perspective, it should be noted that Paul's task is rendered all the more difficult by his reluctance to use the terminology normally adopted in his cultural context to deal with these matters. Thus, such a terminological complexity deserves some clarification. Traditional scholarship has spent (and still spends, in some cases) a great amount of energy and ingenuity in trying to ascertain whether the ritual actions described by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 were influenced by Hellenistic experiences and models. As noted above, earlier scholars used this connection to argue that the Corinthian "opponents" of Paul were proto-heretics. Their "enthusiasm" for glossolalia was fueled by their inability to shed entirely the relics of their "pagan" past. More recently, this potential link to Hellenistic "enthusiasm" has been mobilized in a radically negative way. Thus, glossolalia in the context of the earliest Christ groups and writings emerges as an entirely unparalleled phenomenon, with no viable *comparandum* either in the Hellenistic or the Jewish religious contexts.[21] In many cases, this initial stance is developed to demonstrate that the Pauline use of "prophecy" in our three chapters harkens back to the classic prophetic books included in the canonical Hebrew Bible. Such a move conveniently sidesteps both Second Temple Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts on the way to reaffirm both the uniqueness and the supersessionist nature of the early Christ movement.[22]

It is easy to see that there are plenty of contemporary Jewish parallels for both glossolalia and prophecy,[23] but the same can also be said for the Greco-Roman religious and cultural context, provided that one accounts appropriately for the terminological choices made by Paul.[24] In brief, the much-discussed problem of the placement of the Corinthian "ecstatic" phenomena within the history of religion of antiquity is often formulated in ways that are driven more by ideological concerns than by an attempt to give an adequate account of the issues. The stakes are unsurprisingly similar to those evident in the scholarly discussion concerning the ethnic identity of the Corinthian

Christ believers. In too many treatments it is assumed that, by reaching a definitive conclusion about this point (whether the Corinthians were "Gentiles," or Jewish, or some combination thereof), one will also be able to establish the nature of their Christianity or, in more traditional accounts, of their "heresy." However, more recent and theoretically sophisticated studies have drawn attention to the time of composition of 1 Corinthians and to the pressure of Roman imperialistic expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean. In such a context, ethnic identities are more adequately understood as eminently malleable, contested, and constantly renegotiated, even within the Corinth visited by Paul and arguably within the very groups he addressed.[25] Likewise, sufficient parallels to the "ecstatic" experiences of the Corinthians can be drawn from a suitable number of other Jewish and Greco-Roman texts. Nevertheless, it remains doubtful that parallels alone can determine the fundamental character of the phenomena that took place within the Christ groups. This methodological point has particular saliency in regard to terminology. Indeed, on the one hand, a comparative analysis cannot by any means be merely terminological in nature and on the other hand one must account carefully for the fact that Paul's word choices are inflected by his rhetorical interests in 1 Cor 12–14.

The mention of Paul's rhetorical agenda in the three chapters leads one to consider a second, fundamental point with regard to the apostle's discussion of criteria for discernment. As noted above, it is quite clear that some of Paul's difficulties in arguing for his preferred set of criteria are that he is dealing with a phenomenon that we can describe as "emergent." Whereas certainly the Christ groups were not the only ancient social and religious spaces in which possession happened, it seems that in the case of the Pauline group possession presented itself with some specific features. One of them is certainly the identity of the main possessing "spirit," which was that of a Jewish prophet and wonder-maker, condemned and executed for anti-Roman crimes. In connection with this trait, the entire religious experience of the Christ groups must have taken up a general flavor of "foreignness." Indeed, the Jewish traditions to which Paul sometimes appeals might have looked both attractive and extraneous in a cosmopolitan Mediterranean city like Corinth was in the first century CE.[26] In this perspective, it is natural that Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 adopts a language that is reminiscent of the Jewish scriptures (with a specific insistence on πνεῦμα and προφητεία). At the same time he refrains from uses that might have reminded his listeners of similar phenomena encountered in the "pagan" world (note the absence of references to the terminological domain

of μαντεία). But there is clearly more to this than the need to differentiate the Christ allegiance from other potential competitors available on the religious marketplace in Corinth.

Indeed, many scholars routinely observe that Paul himself does not seem to be entirely sure about the terminology that he is using in the three chapters. A case in point is that of *glossolalia*. There is no reason to believe that the phenomenon per se was unknown in the ancient Mediterranean context or that it was unique to the Corinthian Christ group.[27] However, it is remarkable how uncertain and fluctuating Paul is to speak about it in the relatively brief span of 1 Cor 12–14. Such terminological uncertainty with regard to glossolalia has often stimulated scholarly interest, in particular when one considers the fact that Paul does not seem to waver at all in his use of "prophecy." A convincing solution for the historical and exegetical conundrum is to hypothesize that Paul is in fact "creating" the terminology of "glossolalia" explicitly for the rhetorical needs of his argument in 1 Cor 12–14.

In this perspective, it is clear that the apostle's difficulty is compounded by the fact that he is dealing with a phenomenon that, while not unique by any means, presents some features that are "emergent" in the Christ groups. There is little doubt that Paul found it convenient to describe Christ possession by adopting the terminology of "prophecy." This was well established within the Jewish scriptural tradition and also had sometimes been employed to indicate what can be designated as "oracular possession." It is entirely reasonable to think that "prophecy" as an umbrella term for this type of possession might have covered also the linguistic episodes that we now designate as "glossolalia." However, when Paul was faced with the need to formulate criteria for what he considered an appropriate functioning of possession rituals within the Christ group, he resorted to differentiating "prophecy" and "glossolalia." We will see right away what rationale Paul had to make this move, but there cannot be any doubt that such a differentiation plays a determinant role in the argumentative flow of 1 Cor 12–14. In this perspective, several scholars have already drawn attention to the curious way in which Paul organizes his lists of "spiritual gifts," first in 1 Cor 12:8–10 and later in verses 28–30.[28] In the first instance both "prophecy" and "glossolalia" (here γένη γλωσσῶν) are mentioned close to each other at the end of the list in verse 10. At the end of the chapter, however, Paul moves "prophecy" to the head of the list (which is now also numbered, a feature to which we will return) in verse 28. At the same time, "glossolalia" (now γλώσσαις λαλεῖν) remains at the bottom of it in verse 30. This rhetorical move—combined with what Paul will go on to say

about glossolalia's role in group meetings in chapter 14—is a strong indicator that the apostle is trying to distinguish "glossolalia" from "prophecy" in order to make a point on the radically different values of these two products of possession. While there is little doubt that Paul does not expect to find disagreement within the Corinthian group about his positive evaluation of possession phenomena, the matter of distinguishing "prophecy" and "glossolalia" seems to be quite different. The very terminological fluidity that has been noted above leads one to think that such a distinction might come as a novelty to the Corinthian group. This new taxonomy might—at least in Paul's mind while writing these three chapters—meet with some measure of resistance.

But what are then the controlling and discerning criteria that Paul is arguing for in 1 Cor 12–14? On this point as well, recent scholarship has produced significant advancements that might prove useful for the overall argument developed here. The first and basic criterion argued for and deployed by Paul has to do with the unity and "edification" (ἡ οἰκοδομὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας) of the group itself understood as a cohesive and harmonious body. Indeed, in a thorough and seminal analysis of the entire letter, Margaret Mitchell has shown that the writing should be taken as belonging to the genre of deliberative rhetoric. As such, the main point argued by Paul throughout 1 Corinthians is unity and concord. Within the structure required by the ancient deliberative genre, chapters 12–14 appropriately play the role of a proof for the existence of divisions in Corinth and for the consequent need to foster concord.[29] Mitchell demonstrates convincingly that the three chapters form a sophisticated rhetorical unit. In particular, chapter 13 should be included in the rhetorical structure as an organic part of the deliberative argument developed by Paul. The "hymn of love" has often been taken by exegetes as an extraneous piece, puzzlingly sandwiched between chapters 12 and 14. But, given the context, Mitchell's analysis clarifies that a more adequate translation of ἀγάπη would probably be something like "group allegiance." In fact, chapter 13 is an entirely coherent component of Paul's reasoning that builds on the two premises of the need for unity (chapter 12) and of the need of "love" in order to have unity (chapter 13) to ground the practical instructions that the apostle gives in chapter 14.

Obviously, the rhetorical appeal for unity is something that stretches throughout the entire letter and for which Paul cannot expect much opposition on the Corinthian side. As for the issue of cultivating possession phenomena, Margaret Mitchell clearly demonstrates that the rhetoric of concord

and edification was well established in the Greco-Roman world. As such, its usefulness would have been an uncontroversial matter for the apostle's addressees. A completely different affair is that of the other main criterion presented by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14. This has to do with the singling out of "glossolalia" and its distinction from "prophecy" that has already been mentioned. In chapter 14 it becomes clear that Paul wants the Corinthians to know that they should be evaluating possession phenomena in terms of their contribution to the goal of edification and concord. In this perspective, a fundamental element for Paul is intelligibility. Indeed, he thinks that verbal expressions that can be understood by all the members of the group can more effectively contribute to communal edification (this cardinal principle is expressed clearly in 1 Cor 14:4).[30] On the contrary, the apostle assumes that lack of content communication through linguistic expression would produce the collapse of social structures and the dissolution of social unity. With respect to this negative expectation, Mitchell observes that the apostle—in 1 Cor 14:11—rhetorically employs for the act of speaking in tongues the image of the "barbarian." This gesture—within the Greek discourse of Otherness and foreignness—cannot fail to evoke the notion of social alterity and division.[31] Thus, the unintelligible "glossolalia" will have to take a marginal and heavily controlled position in the Corinthian possession rituals, while "prophecy" is left by Paul to be pursued with intensity and zeal.

Laura Nasrallah showed that this focalization on intelligibility as a fundamental criterion does not mean—as thought by many earlier interpreters—that Paul is privileging "prophecy" over "glossolalia" because of the ecstatic nature of the latter.[32] Even though the apostle states that "mind" (νοῦς) is not implicated in "glossolalia,"[33] he does recognize that prophecy too is ecstatic in nature. The criteria presented in 1 Cor 12–14 are not about rationality. Nasrallah argues that the criterion of intelligibility is by its nature more appropriately described as focused on epistemology. In limiting what can be known through glossolalia but ultimately also through any other state of possession, "Paul posits a current epistemic chasm between realms of human knowledge and realms of divine knowledge so deep that humans only dimly see the possibility of being spiritual."[34] As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, the Corinthians might have thought about these issues in a way that led them to uphold a significantly different set of criteria. In particular, it will become clear that an alternative paradigm might have solved Paul's epistemological problem in a different way. In an alternative scenario, intelligibility may not

have been that crucial or might even have taken a different meaning within an alternative understanding of the performative context.

In any event, before moving on to the next section of this chapter, it is worth highlighting another logical and rhetorical consequence that Paul draws from these fundamental criteria. If—as maintained by Nasrallah—Paul is arguing for a criterion of intelligibility that is fundamentally epistemological in nature, the solution he proposes is nevertheless bound to be heavily cognitive as well. Nasrallah notes that Paul comes back time and again throughout the entire three chapters to tell his readers and hearers that the epistemological chasm between humans and God is not bridgeable. Being "spiritual," which for him means being possessed by Christ, is simply not enough. On the contrary, chapter 13 is key in the structure of the rhetorical development from 12 to 14. Indeed, the middle chapter makes clear that whatever effectiveness can be ascribed to spiritual experiences manifested within the Christ groups (even prophecy, not only glossolalia), it is fundamentally temporary and incomplete. The epistemological gap will be bridged only at another time—the time of the end—when even prophecy will become inoperative and will be revealed as childish.[35]

It goes without saying that—in large measure—such an insistence on the limitation of human capability to know through spiritual experiences is dictated to Paul by the specific rhetorical situation of the letter. Elsewhere—as many scholars have observed and as we have seen in the preceding chapters—the apostle extols in no uncertain terms how possession can put Christ believers in direct and intimate contact with the Christ πνεῦμα and God. But the argumentative choice made by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 leads one almost naturally to establish some other types of mediations. For some form of communication with the divine, however fleeting and incomplete, is necessary for the very socio-religious organization of the Christ group's possession rituals. A first consequence of Paul's move is thus that the focus on intelligibility compels him to put a lot of weight on elements related to the cognitive contents of spiritual utterances. In this perspective, it is unsurprising that exactly the contents of utterances made in a state of possession are presented from the very beginning of chapter 12 as the central element for discerning which "spirits" should be retained and cultivated and which ones instead should be avoided.

A second consequence of Paul's need for alternative forms of mediation is the centrality that he gives to his own voice and practice. The latter becomes a model to imitate for his addressees and ultimately a normative source of

valid criteria for the discernment of acceptable possession. As before, Margaret Mitchell explains that the apostle is here once again following the pattern of deliberative rhetoric that governs the entire argument of the letter.[36] There are indeed several examples drawn from contemporary Greco-Roman deliberative literature in which authors hold themselves up as models of the behavior that they are advocating for in their speeches. Paul performs a very similar move in a pattern that is easily recognizable through the rhetorical texture of 1 Cor 12–14 (and obviously also elsewhere in the letter). That begins already in chapter 12, when—as we have noted—the apostle presents his two slightly (but no less significantly) different lists of spiritual gifts. In the second instance (in which glossolalia is relegated to the end), another striking variation is that Paul begins the list by numbering the first three gifts. Thus, apostleship, prophecy, and teaching are clearly ordered in a pattern that, while not explicitly evaluative, certainly establishes a hierarchy among them.[37] The pattern becomes even more explicit at the beginning of chapter 13, which is structured in a negative form, listing the futility of Paul's achievements if he had any other virtue or power but love. Again, the same theme is maintained throughout chapter 14, reaching a height in verses 18–19, where Paul straightforwardly boasts about his superior ability to practice glossolalia and hyperbolically communicates why he refrains from overdoing it.[38] The rhetorical construction of the entire section obviously culminates in the ending of chapter 14, where the apostle presents the criteria that he has advocated for as being "a commandment of the Lord."[39] What saying of Jesus Paul is referring to here is a matter of great discussion. If one follows the suggestion of Christian Stettler and Luigi Walt, it may be possible to identify this saying as the commandment to love each other that is well attested all over the Gospel traditions.[40] This would fit perfectly after 1 Cor 13, in particular when "love" is understood as "group allegiance," as happens quite consistently in the Johannine *corpus.*

Such a powerful conclusion is perfectly attuned to the structure of deliberative rhetoric. However, it is also interesting to see how Paul articulates the pattern in ways that are specifically suited to his persona and his position within the Christ groups. Clearly, he has prepared everything rhetorically already from chapter 12, in which—as we have just seen—he has ordered the charismatic fruits of possession. Thus, "apostleship," the one he claims to hold as the founder of the Corinthian groups, outranks all the others. In the conclusion of chapter 14, this line of reasoning is resumed no longer through an explicit mention of Paul's status as an "apostle" (this obviously encompasses

the entire letter, since it is the very first thing written to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:1). This time it is the function of Paul as literal mouthpiece of the Lord (here arguably signifying Jesus Christ) that indicates to the addressees that his opinion on the criteria to manage and organize spirit possession in their group should be taken as definitive. It is only partially paradoxical that—in trying to convince the Corinthians of the value inherent in his proposal—the apostle appeals to charismatic revelations, the very type of revelation he also wants to limit when it is employed by the members of the Christ group in Corinth. Ultimately, this is a conundrum that Paul himself cannot avoid, since the very origin and the very success of his missionary activity in Corinth appear to have been inextricably bound with his preaching of a possession cult.

In brief, Paul uses the three chapters in 1 Corinthians as a space to argue in favor of his criteria for a proper organization of spirit possession rituals within the Christ group. The first criterion proposed by the apostle is that of the common "edification" of the group's social body. The second criterion— closely linked to the first one—gives precedence to the intelligibility of the messages received in the state of possession. The latter is primarily an episte-mological criterion. However—for its very nature and for the rhetorical con-straints of Paul's deliberative style in the letter—it also privileges the contents of the messages communicated to the possessed individuals and ultimately their evaluation by Paul himself, acting in his recognized role of "apostle."

This section has been devoted primarily to an understanding of the crite-ria proposed by Paul and of the rhetorical argument put forth by the apostle to support them. As such, this treatment of 1 Cor 12–14 runs the serious risk of merely reinscribing Paul's argument. It would indeed be misleading to assume that whatever Paul says—despite its more than evident rhetorical ten-dencies—either corresponds faithfully to the actual situation in Corinth or gives a fair and reliable representation of the voice of Paul's addressees in the Greek city. In order to avoid the danger of focusing only on the apostle's voice and thus "heroizing" him, one must face the challenge of trying to give a reliable representation of the Corinthians' voices, in the absence of their own writing in response to Paul's communications. The remainder of the chapter will try to tackle this methodological problem with specific reference to a possible discussion in Corinth about regulative criteria for the performance of possession in the context of the Christ group meetings. In the next section, we will reexamine 1 Cor 12–14 "against the grain," in order to unearth at least some elements of the Corinthians' voices hidden behind Paul's rhetoric. This move can only be executed to a limited extent. However, it can be integrated

with another critical procedure that consists of bringing into consideration another text that is reasonably close to 1 Corinthians in time, space, and cultural context. This other text might be profitably compared with Paul's argument in order to imagine what might have been an alternative solution for the problems faced by Paul and the other members of the Christ group in Corinth.

WHAT DID THE CORINTHIANS THINK?

There are indeed some indicators—which we have noted already in the preceding section—that let us glimpse the fault lines in Paul's deliberative argument developed in chapters 12–14. An important example has come up already in the examination of the terminology used by Paul to designate the two phenomena of "prophecy" and "glossolalia." It is often noted by scholars that "prophecy" appears to be a fixed concept in Paul's idiolect. This cannot be surprising, since the term is well established in the Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures, but the same cannot be said of "glossolalia."

We have seen already above that Paul does not use a uniform terminology when he speaks about the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues." On the basis of this observation, scholars have often suggested that perhaps the apostle himself is "inventing" the phenomenon of "glossolalia" specifically to serve the rhetorical purposes of 1 Cor 12–14. Indeed, it is evident that the deliberative structure of the three chapters has the main aim of underplaying and diminishing the importance and positive role of "glossolalia." In this perspective, obviously, to state that Paul might have "invented" the phenomenon does not mean that "speaking in tongues" did not exist before the apostle's writing of 1 Corinthians. Clearly, chapters 12–14 make sense only if one assumes that Paul is referring to something that his interlocutors in Corinth already know well. It is also evident that "speaking in tongues" was normally connected to spirit possession as the latter was practiced in the Christ group. Thus, what Paul "invented" is not "speaking in tongues," even though he might have well been the first one to introduce the Corinthians to this practice at an earlier stage of his missionary activity in the city. What the apostle "invented" is instead the label *glossolalia,* which is indeed quite flexible and, so to speak, not yet solidified into technical jargon, when he employs it in 1 Cor 12–14. This observation leads one to ask how the Corinthians might have categorized *glossolalia* before Paul's intervention. A few years ago, Thomas Gillespie advanced an interesting solution for this interpretive

problem.[41] Gillespie suggested that Paul had to "invent" a new category for the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" because the Corinthians, while certainly used to such a practice within their Christ group, did not see it as distinct from "prophecy." Whatever one makes of Gillespie's further hypothesis that the Corinthians understood "speaking in tongues" as a phenomenon that always preceded and validated "true" prophetic utterances,[42] the initial insight can be put to productive work in order to imagine what might have been the position of Paul's interlocutors. Indeed, Paul's treatment in 1 Cor 12–14 indicates clearly—and not only terminologically—that "prophecy" and "glossolalia" are mutually connected for him more than they are tied to the other "spiritual gifts" about which he speaks in the three chapters. For instance, the two different lists of charisms (which occur in chapter 12 and have been mentioned already in the preceding section) support this observation. In the first one "prophecy" and "glossolalia" are mentioned one right after the other (in v. 10), while only later on are they separated (in vv. 28–30) as part of a rhetorical move on Paul's part whose intent is transparent.

These observations lead quite logically to ask what "glossolalia" might have been for the Corinthians, besides its well-established connection with "prophecy." In this respect, even to ascertain what Paul has in mind when he refers to "speaking in tongues" is a notorious exegetical and historical problem. For starters, despite his numerous references to "glossolalia" in 1 Cor 12–14, the apostle never explicitly spells out the practical significance of such a phenomenon. In part this might be due—as we have just noted—to the fact that he is "inventing" the category even as he writes the letter. But clearly a major factor behind Paul's "reticence" on this point is more simply the shared understanding between writers and receivers of the epistles on the practical meaning of "glossolalia." Unfortunately, other early Christian writings are less than helpful in solving this conundrum. In the past, some scholars have suggested that the nature of "glossolalia" could be reconstructed backward into Paul's authentic epistles by looking at the way in which Luke-Acts describes the phenomenon, in particular in the very important second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. There, "speaking in tongues" is presented as the ability—miraculously infused by the "spirit"—to speak unlearned foreign languages (*xenoglossia*). There is no doubt that the author of Acts employs this representation of "speaking in tongues" in the attempt of rendering narratively and explicitly the "glossolalia" that he had encountered either in the Pauline epistles or in the tradition of the Christ groups he was acquainted with.[43] However, it is doubtful that "speaking foreign languages" is what the

apostle (and his Corinthian interlocutors) had in mind when writing or reading 1 Cor 12–14. In this perspective, most scholars routinely observe that in these three chapters Paul does not hint even once at foreign languages as being the content of "glossolalia." If the apostle (and his interlocutors) were thinking about "speaking in tongues" in this way, he could have never used the image of someone becoming a "barbarian" to another member of the group when practicing "glossolalia," as he does in 1 Cor 14:11 to great rhetorical effect. Moreover, there is ample reason to think that the representation of "glossolalia" as speaking unlearned foreign languages in Act 2 might be driven by Luke's theological agenda. Indeed, the entire chapter is built as a manifesto that introduces the main emphasis of the book on the universal spread of Christ's "good news." Such a revolutionary event is grounded in turn on a sort of "counter-narrative" of the episode of Nimrod's tower in Genesis 11. Thus, for Luke the episode of Pentecost becomes a symbol of God's intervention to repair the division of humankind that had taken place as a consequence of the failed attempt to build the tower. One suspects that such a representation of "glossolalia" might be a redactional creation, developed *ad hoc* by the author of Acts in order to fit his theological narrative. This impression is confirmed by even a cursory observation of the other occurrences of the same phenomenon in the rest of the book. It is interesting to note that in all the other cases the descriptions seem to exclude any reference to "speaking unlearned and foreign languages." There is no doubt that "glossolalia" continues to play a crucial theological role in the narrative of Luke, but the sense of discontinuity with Act 2 is unmistakable. For instance, in the long episode of the conversion of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, "glossolalia" is introduced at a key juncture. The phenomenon brings about the momentous decision of admitting the Gentile and his household into the Christ group without requiring either his circumcision or the full observance of the Mosaic law (in Act 11:46).[44] Both the Jews who are present at the scene and Cornelius and his household shared the same language also in their preceding communications. Thus, there is no question that when the latter are heard "speaking in tongues and extolling God" (ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν), the mechanics of the event do not have to do with miraculous translation from one language to another.[45]

By taking away Act 2 and its understanding of "glossolalia" as xenoglossia, one is left with fewer indicators to hypothesize what was in the mind of Paul and his interlocutors. Most scholars agree that the apostle himself gives an important hint in 1 Cor 13:1: ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ

καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων ("Even if I speak in the tongues of humans and angels"). The verse is the first one in a series of three, in which—as we have seen—Paul lists feats of spiritual prowess and virtue in order to show that they are secondary with respect to "love" (or "group loyalty," as one could render the Greek ἀγάπη in this context). Since 13:2 contains a mention of "prophecy" and Paul has just referred to both "prophecy" and "glossolalia" in the list at the end of chapter 12, it is reasonable to suppose that 13:1 can be taken as an indirect mention of "speaking in tongues." On this basis, the most widely held hypothesis is that the "tongues" spoken in Corinth (and arguably within other Christ groups, since Paul states quite clearly that he as well practices "glossolalia") are some form of angelic language.[46] The idea that angels or other superhuman beings speak a special language (sometimes identified as Hebrew) in their interactions among themselves and with the divine power is relatively widespread in Jewish documents of the Second Temple period.[47] In this perspective, it is even possible to imagine that Paul might have understood practicing "glossolalia" as speaking a Semitic language. This might be envisaged as a convenient means to code the religious experience that he was presenting to the Corinthians as "foreign."

Two further observations can be made on the basis of this identification of the nature of "glossolalia" in 1 Corinthians. First of all, if the content of "glossolalia" is conceived as angelic language, then there is no reason to suppose that the phenomenon might have been understood—either by the Corinthians or by Paul—as the expression of irrational or meaningless utterances. As we have noted, associating the Corinthian opponents of Paul with irrationalism and ecstatic frenzy is a favorite move of modern critical exegesis. But such a move seems to be driven more by contemporary western theological concerns than by a convincing reading of the texts. As we have seen, these are not Paul's concerns or the foundations of the criteria he defends in 1 Cor 12–14. The deliberative reasoning offered by the apostle in the three chapters insists on communal edification and intelligibility, but he does not chastise irrationalism in the practice of "glossolalia" (or "prophecy" for that matter, since the latter is no different from the first in terms of its "spiritual" or ecstatic nature).[48]

The second observation brings us back to the central issue of possession. We have seen already in the preceding chapters that in several documents belonging to the Second Temple period angels provide authors with an effective means to speak about what we would call "spirits." Indeed, various sorts of "glossolalia" (as well as the more widely intelligible divination that Paul desig-

nates as "prophecy" in 1 Cor 12–14) are often connected to spirit possession. It goes without saying that different cultural contexts lead practitioners to provide different cultural understandings of what kind of language constitutes "glossolalia." We will have the opportunity of reviewing a few ethnographic examples later on, but for the time being it is worth noting that Paul's and the Corinthians' understanding of "glossolalia" as speaking angelic languages is entirely consistent with manifestations of possession. The "spirit" that talks through the possessed members of the Christ group can be conceived as an "angel." As such, "angels" are entirely capable of communicating using either an intelligible human tongue (which Paul defines as "prophecy") or an unintelligible angelic language (which Paul labels "glossolalia" in 1 Cor 12–14). This observation brings us back to the epistemological concerns that—as we have seen in the preceding section—are central for the apostle in the three chapters. If we want to attempt an imaginative reconstruction of the Corinthians' point of view, "glossolalia" might have been understood by them as a means to bridge the chasm between human and divine spheres. That is exactly the gap that—as we have just seen above—Paul considers nearly unbridgeable or partially bridgeable only through the figure of the "apostle." In the case of "glossolalia," the divine becomes present within the Christ group through the mediation of "angels" (or "spirits") possessing Christ believing mediums.

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF "GLOSSOLALIA"

1 Corinthians is certainly the Pauline letter that has attracted the most attention on the part of scholars interested in knowing more about the social structures of the earliest Christ groups. This is not surprising since the apostle addresses in the letter a noteworthy series of issues that have significant social relevance but are otherwise often neglected in other writings belonging to the Christ movement. It goes without saying that chapters 12–14 have been included in the same investigations. Since Paul employs elsewhere in the letter images and references that are connected to several kinds of social binaries and distinctions, some of these structures have been "imported" in the exegesis and historical contextualization of our three chapters as well. Thus, for instance, Paul elsewhere works with a strong/weak binary that is often taken to reflect a difference in social status or class (as in 1 Cor 8:10–11). It is often argued that the conflict around "glossolalia" might reflect a similar social rift within the Christ group. In this perspective, it is common to read that the distinction between "glossolalia" and "prophecy"—mistakenly, as

we have seen—equals a distinction between "irrationalism" and "rationality," with the latter belonging to a sub-group of the more educated members of the group who are thus more highly situated in the social hierarchy.[49] Another very influential exegetical option has consisted of mapping Paul's polemic against "glossolalia" not onto educational or socioeconomic oppositions but onto gender difference. Admittedly, this way to read chapters 12–14 might find a strong support within the text itself, if one accepts that verses 14:33b–36 belonged to the "authentic" version of the letter penned by the apostle.[50] Leaving that thorny issue aside, even without 1 Cor 14:33b–36 there are other passages within the letter that reveal a certain patriarchal understanding of gender relations on the part of Paul (an obvious case in point is the much-debated passage 1 Cor 11:2–16). Antoinette Clark Wire has produced an influential reading of Paul's letter, in which his deliberative rhetoric (both in general and in the section against "glossolalia" under examination here) is wielded to thwart the exercise of autonomous "prophecy" on the part of Corinthian women.[51]

Thus, most interventions on the social significance of Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians have tended to see "glossolalia" as an indicator of low status (be it socioeconomic, gender, or educational). A relevant, and dissonant, proposal within this debate has been put forth by Dale Martin.[52] Martin tries to show that "glossolalia" should instead be treated as an indicator of high social "status."[53] Consistent with Martin's reading of Paul's rhetorical aims in the rest of the letter, the apostle would devalue "glossolalia" in order to teach high-status Corinthians an effective means to avoid divisions within the Christ group. Martin's contribution to this debate is very valuable because he is the only one to include in his analysis of "glossolalia"—alongside references drawn from ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman literature—a healthy number of ethnographic parallels to this phenomenon. As such, Martin's study deserves a more detailed analysis, because his conclusions—even if they ultimately do not prove convincing—provide interesting suggestions for an alternative methodological path.

As noted above, Martin takes into consideration several cases of "glossolalia," mostly attested to and described in ethnographic studies. The main conclusion that he is willing to draw from these parallels is that the evaluation of "glossolalia" differs between premodern and modern cultures. In modern contexts the high cultural evaluation of "rationality" leads to lower the effectiveness of "glossolalia" as a status indicator, because this phenomenon is routinely taken as being thoroughly "irrational." In this respect, Martin is

surely right in highlighting the bias inherent in modern western observers. He is also right in noting—as we have done repeatedly in the preceding chapters—that this bias has exercised a strong influence on the interpretation of the Corinthian "glossolalia" as irrationalism.

That being said, it is more difficult to state, as Martin does, that the reverse is also true and thus that in premodern cultural contexts "glossolalia" is systematically taken as an indicator of high social status.[54] Martin does indeed refer to a substantial group of examples, ranging from Greenland shamans to South American *curanderos.* However, one could just as easily marshal a number of ethnographic cases in which the performance of possession is clearly inflected along lines that overlap almost perfectly with social distinctions of various types. For instance, Richard Freeman notes something significant for our purposes in his report and analysis of possession rituals in Malabar or Northern Kerala. Freeman describes complex rituals centered around shrines in which the local deities are led to possess both professional dancers and more official shrine priests. It is not uncommon that—on such occasions—the same deity might possess at the same time several different mediums, who in turn belong to different social and institutional groups. With respect to this point, Freeman observes that "when the vehicles of different *teyyam* deities, as mediums belonging to different castes or status grades of priests or *teyyam* dancers, interact in this way, their behaviors are often regulated according to the unequal powers of the various beings along a gradient of control."[55] Thus, possessed dancers, who occupy a lower social position than the official priests, have to ask formal permission from possessed priests to carry out their allotted part of the rituals. Interestingly for our current purposes, Freeman also notes that "in terms of bodily activities, the more overtly ecstatic behaviors of trembling, jumping, running, shaking paraphernalia, and hooting that might be exhibited by those embodying lower beings, are often demonstrably calmed through receiving the blessing, authoritative gestures, or benedictions of higher embodiments." Similarly, Karin Kapadia notes, in her study of Tamil possession, that possessed women are excluded from performing during episodes of possession by the masculine power that consists in stillness and inactivity.[56]

The correspondence between social positionalities and roles played within a possession ritual, as described by Freeman and others, is clearly influenced by the Indian cultural context. As Fredrick Smith noted in his thorough study of spirit possession in India,[57] the traditional emphasis on self-control as a preeminent indicator of educational and social status has significantly impacted both the ways in which possession is treated in Indian literature and

the ways it is deployed in contemporary rituals. This is only one specific case, but it shows that some aspects of possession reminiscent of the "irrationality" of "glossolalia" might be connected to low social status, even in societies and cultures that are not massively influenced by modern western rationalism. Again, this does not demonstrate that Martin's conclusions with respect to 1 Corinthians are necessarily wrong. But his certitude should be tempered by the notion that possession is a complex and fluid phenomenon, whose correlation to social structures should not be taken as mechanistic. On the contrary, such correlations are best assessed case by case on the basis of an attentive examination of the overall cultural context.[58]

In this perspective, perhaps Martin's treatment does not give enough consideration to the performative nature of possession. This is particularly true of 1 Cor 12–14, in which the crucial issue seems to be indeed the most appropriate way to carry out a possession ritual. As we have seen in chapter 2, it is the performative aspect that gives possession rituals the potential to be subversive, but this potential is also limited by their nature as performances. Possession rituals can often objectivize social relations and habits through irony and parody. However, they are seldom able to bring about an actual subversion of, for instance, gender or socioeconomic inequalities outside the confines of the ritual itself. Martin might well be right in assuming that Paul aimed at subverting social roles within the Christ group of Corinth, but the same can be said also for Wire's proposal that the Corinthian women-prophets were the ones aiming for subversion, while the apostle was working against them. It is impossible to even attempt an answer to this question without considering the entire letter, a project that is beyond the reach of the present treatment. Moreover, as we have seen, such a goal could probably be achieved only if we had a fuller idea of the social relationships in Corinth at large and of the role played by the Christ group in this civic context.[59] In any event, a more adequate consideration of the performative nature of possession might help us to understand better Paul's argument in 1 Cor 12–14 and to imagine more effectively the position of the Corinthian Christ believers.

NEGOTIATING THE PERFORMANCE OF POSSESSION IN 1 COR 12–14

Due to their nature as performances, possession rituals are often subject to negotiations of power and authority between the ritual experts and the

audiences. This is what happens in Corinth as well between Paul and the Corinthian Christ believers to whom he is writing.

Some of the rhetorical moves deployed by the apostle illuminate this point and have already been examined above. However, at this juncture an additional passage can be profitably brought into the conversation. In the middle of chapter 12 and of his appeal for harmony geared toward the "edification" of the group, Paul argues on the basis of a long analogy between the Corinthian body and the human body (vv. 14–26). This is a well-known passage that has received a good deal of exegetical attention. Margaret Mitchell, in her rich analysis of the deliberative rhetoric employed by Paul, has shown that an analogy between the social group and the human body on the part of the apostle should, in this rhetorical context, almost be expected.[60] Mitchell has collected a significant number of parallels, drawn from both Greek and Latin literature, to support her conclusion. She also notes that the utilization of such an analogy is always connected with conservative stances: the hierarchical organization of body parts is presented as a "commonsensical" and natural ordering that should be imitated by the social organization to achieve harmony and prosperity.[61]

Some scholars have contended that in this case Paul is mobilizing the analogy with a different rhetorical aim, more "democratic" than the one encountered in the other ancient parallels.[62] Martin in particular argues that the apostle subverts the conventions of the rhetorical genre by asserting that those body parts that are usually considered weaker are in fact "necessary" (ἀναγκαῖα in 12:22, which might also be a wordplay on "genitals"). Or those that are less honorable or less "presentable" are in fact the object of great dedication to make them look more acceptable (12:23–24).[63] Martin's reading is very insightful, but one might ask whether this is not exactly the point of the analogy also when it is employed by other ancient authors. In general, the rhetorical strength of this type of comparison seems to lie precisely in the fact that body parts (and thus social elements) that might appear at first sight unseemly or not useful are actually entitled to receive special honors or to be in charge of the others. The best-known deployment of the analogy is perhaps the one that Livy puts on the mouth of Menenius Agrippa addressing the plebeian soldiers, who have abandoned their service to protest the harsh dominance of the Roman aristocrats.[64] Agrippa compares the plebeians to the hands, mouth, and teeth, which rebel against the belly because the latter sits quietly and does nothing but take advantage of the pleasures that are given

to it (*ventrem in medio quietum nihil aliud quam datis voluptatibus frui*). The moral of the tale is that other body parts are forced to recognize the otherwise hidden importance of the belly, when their refusal to bring it food leads to a progressive weakening and deterioration of the entire body. This is an extraordinarily sophisticated tale, despite its apparent straightforwardness, but its rhetorical force depends exactly on the effectiveness of the reversal of the judgment on the belly's importance for the body. There is no doubt that any Roman reader would not have considered the belly noble or virtuous when it is described as idle and devoted to taking advantage of pleasures provided by the effort of others. On the contrary, the point of the story is that readers learn that, despite all this, the belly is exceedingly important and deserving of whatever work the other body parts have to contribute. It is worth noting that similar reversals are par for the course for ancient authors engaged in royal propaganda. For instance, many texts "reveal" the unexpected "truth" that being powerful is not at all an enviable condition. Power comes with burdens and travails that some people are willing to shoulder for the benefit of all the others (similar to how, in capitalist regimes, one is told that entrepreneurs are generously and selflessly offering their time and energy to give support to their employees). Such a rhetorical stance reaches in antiquity one of its heights in the often-repeated trope that kings are in fact the "slaves" of their subjects. *Contra* Martin, it seems that Paul's rhetorical play on the relationship between "honorable" and "dishonorable" body parts does indeed work along well-established guidelines for the genre.

In truth, the real rhetorical import of Paul's use of the human body analogy should be assessed on the basis of the overall context provided by chapter 12. In this perspective, it is important to note that the section examined here is bookended by the two lists of spiritual gifts that we have analyzed. At a first level of analysis—through its insistence on the beneficial nature of a hierarchical ordering of parts within a social or bodily unity—the analogy provides a strong foundation for Paul's changes between the first and the second version of the list. Both the separation between "prophecy" and "glossolalia" (with the attendant relegation of the latter to the lowest place in the list) and the absolute prominence given to Paul's specific "gift" (apostleship) are abundantly grounded in the analogy of the body. However, one can also recognize a deeper rhetorical function of this key passage. It is important to keep in mind that much of the deliberative force of the human body analogy is predicated on the assumption that not only social hierarchy but also social differentiation itself are reified and "natural." Thus, just as the eye is

different from the foot and, for that reason, the foot cannot do the job of the eye, so the slave is inherently different from the senator and, for that reason, the slave cannot do the job or occupy the socio-political position of the senator. It is interesting to consider whether Paul might have invoked the human body analogy not only to naturalize unity and hierarchy specifically within the Christ group. We have already seen that the distinction between "prophecy" and "glossolalia" was, in all likelihood, a Pauline innovation. It is tempting to suggest that the Corinthians might have envisaged even the separation between other "gifts" as less rigid. In truth, our imagination on this point is undeniably informed both by Paul's only surviving voice and by the later theological and ecclesiological developments of the Christian churches. But what if the Corinthian Christ believers were not ready to distinguish that sharply among "apostles," "prophets," and "teachers," let alone inscribe them within the hierarchy of 1 Cor 12:27?

Such a suggestion might lead one to reconsider the Corinthian potential reaction to Paul's central concern in 1 Cor 12–14, which should be identified with his attempt to establish criteria for the performance of spirit possession within the Christ group. We have shown that the apostle foregrounds two main criteria that have to do with the "edification" of the group and with the control of "unintelligible" utterances coming from the mediums. There is little doubt that the Corinthian interlocutors of Paul were in agreement with the apostle on the desirability of "edification" as well as "unity" for their group. As noted in its completest form by Margaret Mitchell, these two values are mainstays of deliberative rhetoric in antiquity, and as such their occurrence in 1 Cor 12–14 fulfills the requirements of the genre. However, it must also be added that their very pervasiveness demonstrates how deeply entrenched they must have been on an ideological level. In sum, the rhetorical effectiveness of an appeal to group "edification" is enough to conclude that the Corinthians were in all likelihood in agreement with Paul on this point. The issue might well be different with respect to "intelligibility," however. Paul links "edification" and "intelligibility," arguing that only utterances and oracles that are intelligible can provide an effective basis for the edification of the group. As seen above, this position is undergirded by a specific understanding of the epistemological nature of the communication that takes place in possession rituals. To this is added a specific understanding of the role played by the apostle within the communication and within the life of the Christ group. It is worth asking to what extent this second criterion of Paul's was shared by the Corinthians. It is also questionable whether they would

have accepted the distinction between "prophecy" and "glossolalia" that is so crucial for the apostle.

In order to address this question imaginatively, it is worth taking a step back and looking at the role that unintelligible speech plays in spirit possession. Many ethnographies remark on the role that this type of speech (often called "glossolalia" in the anthropological literature as well) has within episodes and rituals of possession.[65] Few scholars, however, interrogate the importance that unintelligibility has in structuring a possession ritual or in providing a cultural grammar for the very validation of the phenomenon itself. An interesting exception, which might be helpful for the discussion pursued here, is provided by Kristina Wirtz's linguistic analysis of *lucumí* speech in the rituals of Cuban Santería.[66] In these ritual contexts unintelligible languages are often used both for songs honoring the *orichas* and in the speech of the same deities when they become present in the bodies of *santeros*. As in the case of the "tongues of angels," which are dealt with by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14, the language employed in the rituals described by Wirtz is understood as an actual tongue, *lucumí.* This language is in turn historically connected to the Nigerian parlance of the African slaves who were forced to move to Cuba (with the *orichas*) in the early modern period. Taking advantage of her direct observation of Santería rituals, Wirtz is able to illustrate the ways in which unintelligibility is produced differently at different junctures within a ritual and serves multiple purposes according to the different performative settings of possession.

A few of the formal elements observed by Wirtz can prove useful for imagining the dynamics that obtain within a spirit possession ritual in Corinth. First, as noted above, *lucumí* is understood as a conduit that brings modern audiences in contact with the past of Santería and with Africa, from which both the *orichas* and the ancestors of their worshipers are supposed to originate.[67] It is clear that the Corinthian understanding of "glossolalia" as "tongue of the angels" sketches a similar linguistic imagination, which is unintelligible because it belongs to the divine realm. In 1 Cor 12–14, however, there is no indication that "glossolalia" was understood to be also a human language of the distant past, as it is for *lucumí* with respect to the African ancestry of Santería practitioners. That being said, it is worth noting that, some of the infrequent references to Hebrew or Aramaic in Paul's epistolary imply a "glossolalic" context. A case in point occurs in Rom 8:15, where Paul states that Christ believers have received a "spirit of adoption" that leads them to shout "Abba."[68] It is interesting to observe that the apostle and the other fellow Christ believ-

ers utter this foreign word (in need of Greek translation!), while they are "in the spirit of adoption." Such a phrase—as noted repeatedly throughout the book—in the parlance of the early Christ movement indicates the state of possession. That this is not a teaching reserved specifically for the addressees of Paul in Rome is confirmed by the occurrence of the same idea in Gal 4:6, where it is the "spirit of the son" of God who shouts "Abba" from the hearts of the Christ believers.[69] This last passage shows that the "spirit" possessing the members of the Christ group is, as always, Christ, and as such it cannot be surprising that he would speak Hebrew, the language that indexes his cultural and geographical foreignness for the addressees of Paul.[70] If one looks at Paul as one of many "freelance religious experts" along the shores of the Mediterranean (as Heidi Wendt has brilliantly done[71]), such use of Hebrew authorizes through its very foreignness the apostle's expertise on the civic marketplace.

A second trait of unintelligible "glossolalia" noted by Wirtz is again tied to its authorizing potential. Obviously, people who are able to translate *lucumí* into Spanish enjoy a particular degree of authority within Santería groups. Thus, Wirtz relates interesting episodes of competition among *santeros* played out on the assessment of their respective ability to translate appropriately. This seems to happen regularly between practitioners belonging to different generations or when practitioners perform in different urban centers within Cuba and thus need to be authorized by the leaders of other groups. It is entirely likely that something similar might have obtained in the early Christ groups in which possession was performed in forms that included "glossolalia." This is clear in Paul's own treatment in 1 Cor 12–14 since he approvingly mentions a "gift" of "translation of tongues" (ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν in 12:10). Furthermore, in 14:27 he establishes that "glossolalia" can be practiced (with some measure of restraint) as long as the unintelligible utterances are then translated. It appears that such a translation of "glossolalia" is something that the Corinthians share with the apostle, since Paul does not have to argue for it in any specific way. As far as our analysis is concerned, however, there seems not to be a competition comparable to the one described by Wirtz on the ability and skill in translating unintelligible utterances stemming from the divine world.

The need to translate unintelligible communication leads one to look at a third feature highlighted by Wirtz, one that is potentially very useful to unpack the argument developed by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14. The very unintelligibility of *lucumí* songs and possession utterances constitutes its divine character at a fundamental level with respect to the audience, even before any translation

is provided. As such, the very fact that divine songs and the words of the deities, manifesting themselves through possession, are not understandable is the ultimate validation both of their divine origin and of the "real" presence of the *orichas* in the possession ritual. Insightfully, Wirtz observes that "to say a text or an utterance is not intelligible is not to say it has no meaning, but instead that its meaning derives from functions other than denotation. That is, an unintelligible utterance can still fulfill other indexical functions of speech," particularly within the context of a performance such as that of possession rituals.[72]

There is little question that Paul could not disagree more on this point. For the apostle, only intelligible utterances can meet the criterion of "edifying" the group. Thus, "glossolalia" must be translated, and the result is almost to deny that speech has any other function but denotation. It is worth asking whether the Corinthian interlocutors of Paul might have looked at this matter in a different way. Unintelligible "glossolalia" might have fulfilled some other function of speech in the context of their rituals. As seen above in the Santería rituals studied by Wirtz, it is entirely possible that the Corinthians would have taken "glossolalia" as an indicator both of their connection to the divine and of the presence of the Christ πνεῦμα within their assembled group. Laura Nasrallah has shown that—at the core of the argument developed by Paul throughout 1 Cor 12–14—there is a profound epistemological concern, focused on the unbridgeable chasm that separates humans from the divine. The solution proposed by the apostle with regard to this epistemological problem is centered on intelligibility and ultimately on the role of mediator played by the apostle himself. On the basis of πνεῦμα possession— the experience that constitutes the very foundation of Paul's apostleship—the Corinthians can draw an alternative solution for the epistemological conundrum. In this case it is unintelligibility itself that bridges the gap between the human and divine spheres. Possession, as in the case of the Santería rituals described by Wirtz, acknowledges the existence of the gap through the very unintelligibility of "glossolalia." But at the same time, possession bridges the gap through the manifestation of the deity within human bodies with means that are noncognitive and not suitable to be expressed in intelligible speech.

As noted above, this reading of the Corinthian side of the conversation with Paul is necessarily imaginative, because we have at best only glimpses of the Christ group in Corinth through the rhetorical distortion of the apostle. A way to perform this reading in a responsible and controlled fashion is to enlist modern ethnographical parallels such as the one provided by Katerina

Wirtz's powerful description of Santería. An additional path is to look at other ancient texts for an understanding of criteria for possession rituals that might be comparable to the position that we have sketched as an imaginative hypothesis for the Corinthians.

As already mentioned, Dale Martin has already attempted something similar in his seminal contribution on "glossolalia" in 1 Corinthians. Together with several ethnographic examples, Martin does contrast Paul's stance on "glossolalia" with that encountered in ancient authors belonging to the Platonic tradition, in particular Philo and Iamblichus. We will leave Philo aside for the time being, even though the Alexandrian is often compared to Paul for many reasons but in particular on account of their "mysticisms." But it may be more interesting at this juncture to consider Iamblichus, whose stance on the utterance of unintelligible names and speech in ritual contexts could help one flesh out what the Corinthians might have replied to Paul. To invoke the figure of Iamblichus at this point does not imply that one should think about the Corinthians as proto-Neoplatonic or as "gnostics," a hypothesis often advanced by earlier scholars.[73] Behind that move lurked the thinly veiled desire to represent the "adversaries" of Paul as fundamentally non-Christian. That way they could be reinscribed as prototypical "heretics" and the apostle in turn as essentially "orthodox." On the contrary, gesturing at Iamblichus here follows the seminal work on "freelance religious experts" by Heidi Wendt. Taking up a similar approach, Heidi Marx-Wolf urges to look at all of the diverse figures who populate the Mediterranean religious marketplace in the early imperial period but without slotting them into pre-configured taxonomies (be they those of philosophical schools—such as Platonism—or religious traditions—such as Judaism or Christianity).[74]

Indeed, in his famous *Response to Porphyry* (composed at the very beginning of the fourth century),[75] Iamblichus has to justify—among the many topics on which Porphyry had challenged him—his employment of *onomata barbara* ("barbaric names") in theurgic rituals. Porphyry had objected to the recourse to these names "without meaning" (ἄσημα) and asked why it was not possible to employ expressions more familiar to human ears and minds. It is immediately clear that Porphyry's challenge resonates quite well with Paul's concerns about the epistemological value of intelligibility sketched above. Iamblichus's response raises two points that are well worth attending to closely in the present context. First, Iamblichus states that "because the gods have revealed that the entire tongue of the sacred peoples, such as the Assyrians and the Egyptians, is worthy of sacredness [διότι γὰρ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐθνῶν,

ὥσπερ Ἀσσυρίων τε καὶ Αἰγυπτίων, οἱ θεοὶ τὴν ὅλην διαλέκτον ἱεροπρεπῆ κατέδειξαν], then we think that we must address our communications by using the mode of expression that has the same nature of the gods."[76] The first part of Iamblichus's response echoes Wirtz's observations on Cuban *lucumí* but also Paul's assessment of "glossolalia" as angelic language. The analogy becomes even more compelling if one accepts that such an angelic language might be Hebrew or another Semitic tongue. Through it the apostle activates the "foreign" character of his religious expertise exactly as Iamblichus will do roughly two centuries later.

As his second argument against Porphyry, Iamblichus observes that the *onomata barbara* should not be translated at all due to their divine nature, considering that their very unintelligibility enables the humans who use them to establish a contact with the gods.[77] "We guard still complete within our soul the mystical and unspeakable image [τὴν μυστικὴν καὶ ἀπόρρητον εἰκόνα] of the gods and through the *onomata* we elevate our soul to the gods and, once the soul has been elevated, we connect it with the gods as much as possible."[78] Far from being a hindrance, as feared by Paul, unintelligibility becomes the privileged vehicle through which contact with the divine can be actually established. It is intriguing to imagine that the Corinthians might have replied to Paul on "glossolalia" by using a form of the argument adopted by Iamblichus in response to Porphyry.

It is worth noting that Paul himself comments on the performative aspect of the Corinthian possession rituals in a remarkable and much-discussed passage in the middle of chapter 14. The apostle employs an obscure quotation from Isaiah 28:11–12 to introduce a vignette of what might occur to "outsiders" (ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι) who would happen to stumble onto a meeting of the Corinthian group (vv. 20–25).[79] As compellingly illustrated by Mauro Pesce,[80] by contrasting the outsider's reaction to "glossolalia" (the Corinthians must all be "mad") with that to "prophecy" (which results in the confession that "God is really *in you*"), Paul intends to drive home his overarching point about the criterion of intelligibility. Prophecy serves the missionary interest of the group, but it demonstrates even more effectively that the believers are indeed possessed by a divine power. However, it is important to note that the Greek verb that is often translated as "to be mad" (μαίνεσθε) is ambiguous, as it can also mean "to be divinely inspired"; this double meaning is quite widespread in Greek writings at least as far back as Plato's reflections on the different types of madness in the *Phaedrus*. What if indeed that reaction on the part of an "outsider" might have been the correct and expected one, according to

the Corinthians? For them, inhabiting as they were a Greek world, the unintelligibility of divine madness might very well have counted as a secure sign that their performance of possession was valid and effective.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt more closely with the performative nature of possession, since this phenomenon's effectiveness and validity is constantly generated and supported through a triangular negotiation involving mediums, "spirits," and their audiences. Accordingly, the chapter has attended to the argument developed by Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 as an instance of this negotiation about the "correct" performance of a possession ritual. In order to decenter the figure of Paul as much as possible, we have read the three chapters with an eye to the possibility of reconstructing the "voice" of the Corinthians behind the apostle's rhetoric in this dialogue. While Paul emphasized the importance of intelligibility for the revelations uttered in a state of possession (pointing eventually to their cognitive contents and his own apostolic authority), other voices within the Corinthian group(s) might have understood unintelligibility and heteroglossia as the distinctive indicator of a "real" presence of the Christ *pneuma* in them.

Conclusions

The themes of spirit possession and exorcism in New Testament and other early Christian writings have rarely been connected to the most recent and rich ethnographic literature on the topic. An exception that has already been mentioned concerns the social conditions of spirit possession, which have been studied—mostly following Ioan Lewis's seminal lead—in some important contributions. The present treatment has pursued an alternative path, focusing on the "productive" side of spirit possession, understood as an ordinary cultural and religious practice. Ultimately, by reading the texts of the early Christ movement in this light, we have been able to show the ways in which they are undergirded by ontological and ethical paradigms that appear to be radically different from those established as hegemonic in western modernity. As in Denise Buell's project addressing relational ontologies and participative ethical agencies, this book aims to contribute to the proposal of new, more equal, and more sustainable paradigms for the present and the future.[1] In the following paragraphs I will illustrate some of the major ways in which such a critical aspect of spirit possession can emerge in texts of the early Christ movement with the help of appropriate insights drawn from anthropological literature.

An obvious starting point is the effort to treat the "spirits" involved in cases of possession seriously and not merely as mythical and metaphorical representations, as several earlier studies have done. Such a move naturally raises a

host of complex questions concerning notions of ontology and agency, since the latter's allocation to nonhuman entities does collide with the established modern paradigm of the autonomous human individual as the only rightful possessor of agency. On this account, it is worth repeating that such a modern paradigm is largely an ideological construct, since it is evident that, even in contemporary contexts, nonhuman entities (but usually not "spirits") are routinely ascribed "hard" forms of agency—an example being the "economy" or the "markets," to which common political and economic discourses routinely attribute intentionality without any particular hesitancy or afterthought.[2] It goes without saying that it is not enough to acknowledge that ethnographic writing has rendered us alert to the existence and viability of other cultural paradigms and then to allow that in all likelihood the early Christ believers thought differently than modern westerners do. Such a partial approach might well result in a shallow form of relativism that ends up leaving the substantial issues at stake exactly as they were before.[3] In contrast, this book pursues a strategy akin to the "provincialization" of western notions of God attempted by Michael Lambek. By illustrating that conceptions of deities are fundamentally deictic (or, to put this differently, that they are located "in local, particular, contextually dependent manifestations"), Lambek moves beyond the "either/or" logic of Abrahamic religious traditions to a "both/ and" structure in which ontologies should be mapped onto complex and ever-changing situations.[4] In this respect the broader aims of the present intervention might also be compared with what Denise Buell has been recently proposing in her innovative readings of early Christ groups' texts grounded in the insights of contemporary posthumanism and transhumanism.[5]

The previous mentions of alterity lead us to the second major concern of this project, one that is again deeply embedded in the cultural characteristics of possession. All cases of possession are by definition a very intimate association of the self with the Otherness of "spirits," but in some types of possession this trait is further emphasized by the fact that the specific identity of the "spirit" involved turns out to be ethnically and culturally foreign. The most recent ethnographic literature on the subject shows compellingly that this embodiment of Otherness is a jarringly traumatic experience for mediums but also that it can be turned into a culturally productive occurrence when it empowers them to heal, gives them a way to know the mythical as well as the historical past of their group, or finally provides them with the means to reflect on and confront dialectically their socio-cultural conditions.[6] There is little doubt that the writings of the early Christ groups on spirit possession

are full of instances of similar embodied encounters with Otherness, ranging from Jesus's possession by Beelzebul or the narrative about the Gerasene man possessed by a Roman "spirit" in Mark 5 to what must have been the experience of the Gentile members in the Pauline groups possessed by the πνεῦμα of Christ, a condemned Jewish criminal. This book has essayed to illuminate both the traumatic and the empowering sides of these experiences with their consequences for the members of the early Christ groups.

A third element that deserves to be highlighted in connection with the role of Otherness in possession is the peculiar sense of historicity that is fostered by the phenomenon. Several ethnographers have discussed how the manifestation of deceased individuals as "spirits" (either of ancestors or of other remarkable figures of the past) generates a specific notion of temporality that is significantly different—and maybe even incommensurable—than the modern western academic understanding of the discipline of "history."[7] While the latter is grounded on a sharp "distancing" of the present-day historian from the past, in possession "history" becomes alive and active in the present through the bodies of the mediums, which open up a two-way communication that is unthinkable for the western paradigms grounded in the "removal" of the past from the present. The issue here is not whether either of the two types of "historicity" is more "real" or "true" than the other but the recognition that the "possession" type probably held pride of place in the early Christ groups. The latter's knowledge of and interaction with both mythical (as in the case of the primeval "unclean spirits" that figure so prominently in the exorcisms of the Gospel of Mark and are clearly a legacy of the Enochic apocalyptic traditions) and historical (as in the case of the Pauline groups' own encounter with Christ) pasts did arguably take place mostly through possession. The observation has important consequences in several regards. Prominent among them is certainly the approach that should be used in addressing the longstanding issue of the transmission of Jesus traditions within the early Christ groups (with respect to Paul's almost exclusive focus on Jesus's death and resurrection, for instance).[8] Here, there is little doubt that traditional scholarship has too often been hindered by its inability to move beyond the exclusive notion of historical knowledge developed throughout western modernity.[9]

The fourth and final element that deserves to be mentioned here concerns the type of subjectivity that is established through possession and its relationship with the ordering of social and cosmological hierarchies. Several cultural idioms reflecting on possession describe the relationship between

"hosts" and "spirits" in terms that are starkly hierarchical with a preference for the metaphoric domains of sexual relationship or slavery. However, it is worth emphasizing that—as noted with respect to the debate between Paul Christopher Johnson and Michael Lambek—possession itself (particularly when it is repeated and extends over a long span of time) does not consist merely in the complete control of the "spirit" on the "host." The evolving relationship is better described as "negotiation," and the personality of the medium grows through time in terms of its moral and intellectual capabilities.[10] The end result is the formation of a type of "subjectivity" that retains all the complex ambiguity of such a label while challenging modern western ideological conceptions of personhood and agency founded on the ideal of a self-mastering and autonomous individuality.[11] The construction of analogous subjectivities can be detected in early Christ groups' texts too, for instance behind Paul's frequent use of images related to the conceptual domain of slavery to talk about his relation to God or even in the occurrence of sexual language to express the ethical implications of the presence of Christ *in* the bodies of the believers.[12] Moreover, the very employment of political images in describing the reciprocal ties between human hosts and "spirits" or among "spirits" themselves (as in the famous episode of Jesus's answer to the "charge" of being possessed by Beelzebul) points toward the complex ways in which the construction of individual subjectivities and the cosmic or political orders mirror and shape each other.

Finally, some reflections on potential paths for further research are in order. The texts revisited over the five chapters that constitute the present book are all clustered around the figures of Jesus and Paul. While there can be no doubt about the prominent role played by these two figures in the history of the early Christ movement, recent scholarship in New Testament and early Christian studies has rightly called attention to the advantages inherent in "decentering" our scholarly point of view away from the "historical Jesus" or the "heroic Paul." The present book has striven to heed this call by emphasizing the performative aspect of possession in order to highlight how this phenomenon is largely the fruit of a constant negotiation between mediums and their audiences. The same should also be considered true for the texts examined above insofar as they too are the products not only of the single impulses of individual "heroic" actors but also of communal agencies.

It is, however, evident that more can and should be done along these lines. Several other New Testament texts give great attention to possession phenomena in ways that deserve to be explored by adopting the same methodological

guidelines that have been sketched here. A case in point is that of Acts of the Apostles, in which the *pneuma* plays a remarkably important role (even at the level of the literary construction of the plot) but is presented and described with attributes that are significantly different from those evident in the Pauline epistolary, despite the well-known connection between the apostle and the author of Luke-Acts. Another interesting instance is that of the Johannine literature, in which—in sharp contrast with the rest of the writings belonging to the early Christ movement—"spirit" possession does not seem to play any role, not even in the ministry of Jesus, from which the exorcistic element is completely excised. Scholars have long recognized this peculiar feature, but they have not been able to come up with a convincing historical contextualization for it.

It goes without saying that such a plan of research should not by any means be restricted to texts that have been included in the New Testament canon, lest one run the risk of reinscribing this anachronistic distinction too. In fact there are plenty of early Christian texts that have failed to be included in the canonical collection but whose importance for a historical study of possession in the early Christ movement is definitely greater than that which can be ascribed to many canonical writings. To name just one important example, the *Shepherd* of Hermas is enjoying renewed interest among scholars of early Christianity, both because its traditional dating is being reassessed and because it preserves such a wealth of information about the social profile of these early Christ groups. The work of Hermas has been employed here, but it deserves a much more focused reconsideration, since it contains an articulated pneumatology and preserves a description of the performance of possession rituals that can fruitfully be compared with the one from 1 Cor 12–14 examined in the book.[13]

Finally, this field of research can and should be expanded beyond the confines of the literature linked to the Christ movement. In recent years, lively discussions have begun to develop around the crucial topic of different constructions of the self and the trajectories of other attendant ontological issues in Late Antiquity. In many cases, scholarly conversations have included treatments of "demons," "angels," and "spirits" on a span of time ranging from Second Temple Judaism[14] to monastic Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries.[15] To this we might add that most scholars of ancient philosophical schools are now recognizing that—with respect to the above-mentioned themes—the reflections developed among "philosophers" cannot be separated from those encountered in works and among authors that were previ-

ously deemed either too "religious" or too "popular." A more adequate study of sources dealing with possession and exorcism can happen in conversation with and contribute effectively to these lines of research, whose focus is on categories and representations that had an immense impact on modern western civilization and, through it, on a global scale.

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Abbreviations

ADPV	Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästinavereins
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ASE	*Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BiTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zum Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholische Kommentare
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

JAJ	*Journal of Ancient Judaism*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAV	Kommentar zu den apostolischen Vätern
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MTSR	*Method and Theory for the Study of Religion*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTSMS	New Testament Studies Monograph Series
RB	*Revue Biblique*
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
RHPR	*Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*
RHR	*Revue d'Histoire des Religions*
RQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RSPT	*Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SCO	*Studi classici e orientali*
SupplJSPseud	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
SupplJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
SupplNT	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
SupplRivBib	Supplementi della Rivista Biblica
SupplVChr	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
VChr	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZRGG	*Zeitschrift für Religions-und Geistesgeschichte*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Anonymous, "Ostensione 2015: Oltre 2 milioni di pellegrini davanti alla Sindone," *Santa Sindone: Sito ufficiale,* available at www.sindone.org/santa_sindone/news_e _info/00056994_Ostensione_2015__oltre_2_milioni_di_pellegrini_davanti_alla _Sindone.html, accessed April 3, 2019.

2. Erica Di Blasi, "Donna va in trance davanti alla Sindone: 'Il diavolo è in me,'" *La Re-pubblica Torino,* June 14, 2015, available at http://torino.repubblica.it/hermes/inbox/ 2015/06/14/news/trance_davanti_al_telo_il_diavolo_e_in_me_-116806543/, accessed April 3, 2019.

3. Erica Di Blasi, "L'esorcista: 'Ma il diavolo davanti al telo avrebbe avuto reazioni molto violente,'" *La Repubblica Torino,* June 15, 2015, available at http://torino.repubblica.it/ cronaca/2015/06/15/news/l_esorcista_ma_il_diavolo_davanti_al_telo_avrebbe_avuto _reazioni_molto_violente_-116902386/, accessed April 3, 2019.

4. Di Blasi, "L'esorcista."

5. Paolo Rodari, "Sacerdote arrestato nel Casertano, Associazione Esorcisti: 'Non era autorizzato a praticare quei riti,'" *La Repubblica Vaticano,* February 24, 2018, available at www.repubblica.it/vaticano/2018/02/24/news/vaticano_esorcisti-189667448/?ref= RHRS-BH-I0-C6-P1-S1.6-T1, accessed April 3, 2019.

6. On this point, see the important observations of Pieter F. Craffert, "What Does It Mean to Be Possessed by a Spirit or Demon? Some Phenomenological Insights from Neuro-Anthropological Research," *HTS* 71 (2015): 1–9.

7. So, for instance, E. P. Sanders, in his famous list of "almost indisputable facts" con-cerning the historical Jesus leaves exorcisms shockingly out of consideration. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 11.

8. Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* (New York: Putnam, 1901), 24–29.

9. Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Massiahship and Passion* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 143.

10. The theological issue is well illustrated in the conclusions of Bernd Kollmann, *Jesus und die Christen als Wundertäter: Studien zu Magie, Medizin, und Schamanismus in Antike und Christentum* (FRLANT 170; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 379–380.

11. It will suffice for now to mention Halvor Moxnes's multiple contributions on exorcism in the Jesus tradition (which will be discussed in due course) as well as Amanda Witmer, *Jesus the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context* (LNTS 459; London: T&T Clark, 2012).

12. For different but fundamentally congruent genealogical reconstructions, see John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); and Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

13. For a different perspective, see the reflections in Denise K. Buell, "The Microbes and Pneuma That Therefore I Am," in *Divinanimality: Animal Theory, Creaturely Theology,* ed. S. D. Moore (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 63–87.

14. Rudolf Bultmann, *Neues Testament und Mythologie: das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung,* 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1985).

15. For some scathing criticism of this, see Shawn Kelley, *Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology, and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship* (London: Routledge, 2002).

16. Pithily summarized in the *dictum*: "It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of miracles." Bultmann, *Neues Testament und Mythologie,* 5.

17. Meier mentions, in particular, a 1989 Gallup opinion survey finding that 82 percent of Americans subscribed to the statement that "even today, miracles are performed by the power of God." John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus,* vol. 2, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 520.

18. Meier, *Marginal Jew,* 2:617.

19. For instance, Meier, a Catholic priest, has not refrained from expounding views on Jesus's natural family that are in large measure at odds with official ecclesiastical statements and did indeed put him in an awkward position.

20. A very similar diagnosis and a similar way out is sketched in Halvor Moxnes, "Ethnography and Historical Imagination in Reading Jesus as an Exorcist," *Neot* 44 (2010): 327–341.

21. Janice Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 407–434.

22. I employ the term *transduction* here in the sense used in Webb Keane, "On Spirit Writing: Materialities of Language and the Religious Work of Transduction," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19 (2013): 1–17.

23. The book was published originally in 1971, as a vastly expanded version of the prestigious Malinowski lectures that the author presented at the London School of Econom-

ics in 1966 (in a storied Department of Anthropology which Lewis himself went on to chair a few years later). The version of the book referred to here is the third edition. Ioan M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 2003). Another influential volume coming out of the same time period—but shaped more by the psychologizing tendencies of Margaret Mead's work—is Erika Bourguignon, *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973).

24. It is worth noting here the remarkable role played by Italian tarantism, which constitutes the only European instance of a possession cult mentioned by the British author. On this subject Lewis is informed primarily by Ernesto De Martino, *La terra del rimorso: contributo a una storia religiosa del Sud* (La Cultura 42; Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1961). That tarantism might have actually been a form of possession (caused by a hybrid combination of the tarantula spider and Saint Paul, as maintained by Lewis) is now highly questionable. On this complex debate, see Giovanni Pizza, *Il tarantismo oggi: antropologia, politica, cultura* (Biblioteca di testi e studi 989; Rome: Carocci, 2015); on the equally discussed notion of a specific "European possession," see Cristiano Grottanelli, "Discussione su 'Storia notturna' di Carlo Ginzburg," *Quaderni di storia* 34 (1991): 103–116.

25. See, in particular, the strong theoretical analyses in Linda L. Giles, "Possession Cults on the Swahili Coast: A Re-examination of Theories of Marginality," *Africa* 57 (1987): 234–258; and Lesley A. Sharp, *The Possessed and the Dispossessed: Spirits, Identity, and Power in a Madagascar Migrant Town* (Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care 37; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

26. Similar criticism is developed also by Fredrick M. Smith, who concludes that Lewis's model is "excessively deterministic" and his distinctions "unproductive and misleading." Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 60–66.

27. This change of perspective is epitomized by Janice Boddy, who explains how the most recent studies of possession have tried to move "beyond instrumentality." See Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited."

28. Beginning with Michael Lambek, *Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Mayotte* (Cambridge Studies in Cultural Systems 6; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Lambek, *Knowledge and Practice in Mayotte: Local Discourses of Islam, Sorcery, and Spirit Possession* (Anthropological Horizons 3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

29. See, for instance, Michael Lambek, "Exotic Ordinary," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 41 (2013): 61–68.

30. Michael Lambek, "From Disease to Discourse: Remarks on the Conceptualization of Trance and Spirit Possession," in *Altered State of Consciousness and Mental Health: A Cross-Cultural Perspective,* ed. C. A. Ward (Cross-Cultural Research and Methodology 12; London: Sage, 1989), 52–57.

31. See the comments on different registers of opera singing in Michael Lambek, "How to Make Up One's Mind: Reason, Passion, and Ethics in Spirit Possession," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 79 (2010): 723.

32. For instance, Linda Giles, despite siding with Lambek in defending the appropriateness of the "textual" approach, notes critically that the rich dialectic enmeshed in these possession texts might be even more evident in "public ceremonial performances," an aspect that seems to have been secondary in Lambek's earlier ethnographic writing. Giles, "Possession Cults," 250.

33. Arguing against the application of Geertzian methodologies to a different issue, see Sarah E. Rollens, "Does 'Q' Have Any Representative Potential?" *MTSR* 23 (2011): 64–78.

34. See, for a different time period, the cases examined in Peregrine Horden, "Responses to Possession and Insanity in the Early Byzantine World," *Social History of Medicine* 6 (1993): 177–194.

35. For instance, Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Ethiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Pion, 1958).

36. W. S. Sax, J. Quack, and J. Weinhold, eds., *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

37. For a step in this direction, see the sketch on exorcisms understood as "transformances" in Christian Strecker, "Jesus and the Demoniacs," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels,* eds. W. Stegemann, B. J. Malina, and G. Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 117–133.

38. Smith, *Self Possessed,* 33–94.

39. Jonathan Z. Smith, "Re: Corinthians," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians,* ed. R. Cameron and M. P. Miller (Early Christianity and Its Literature 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 27. Smith's actual redescription is less compelling as it seems to reinscribe the traditional theological opposition between Paul and the Corinthians mired in their "pagan" past. On this subject, see William E. Arnal, "Bringing Paul and the Corinthians Together? A Rejoinder and Some Proposals on Redescription and Theory," in the same volume, 81.

40. Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited," 407.

41. See Diana Espírito Santo, "Spiritist Boundary-Work and the Morality of Materiality in Afro-Cuban Religion," *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2010): 64–82; and Kristina Wirtz, "Spirit Materialities in Cuban Folk Religion," in *The Social Life of Spirits,* ed. R. Blanes and D. Espírito Santo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 126–156.

42. The point is convincingly argued in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

43. See Denise K. Buell, "Imagining Human Transformation in the Context of Invisible Powers: Instrumental Agency in Second-Century Treatments of Conversion," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity,* ed. T. Karlsen Seim and J. Oklund (Ekstasis 1; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 249–270.

44. Paul C. Johnson, "Toward an Atlantic Genealogy of 'Spirit Possession,'" in *Spirited Things: The Work of "Possession" in Afro-Atlantic Religions,* ed. Paul C. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 23–45. I have written "encounter" between quotation marks because possession was obviously a relatively widespread phenomenon in Europe at the time, so Europeans did not actually need to go to Africa to

"encounter" it. However, the phenomenon was actively marginalized in the religious discourse of European Christianity of the time, forming the other supporting piece for the construction of a modern autonomous and capitalist self. See Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

45. Michael Lambek, "Afterword," in *Spirited Things*, ed. Johnson, 261–262.

46. The classic example being Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

47. Most notably by Fritz Graf, in a very influential book that, however, shows how unwieldy and artificial can such an approach turn out to be. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Revealing Antiquity 10; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

48. For a discussion related to Jewish materials of the Second Temple period, see W. J. Lyons and A. M. Reimer, "The Demonic Virus and Qumran Studies: Some Preventive Measures," *DSD* 5 (1998): 16–32; for more wide-ranging treatments, see Bernd-Christian Otto, "Towards Historicizing 'Magic' in Antiquity," *Numen* 60 (2013): 308–347; Michael Becker, "Die 'Magie'-Problematik in der Antike—genügt eine sozial-wissenschaftliche Erfassung?" *ZRGG* 54 (2002): 1–22; Harold Remus, "'Magic, Method, Madness," *MTSR* 11 (1999): 258–298; Henk S. Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic—Religion," *Numen* 38 (1991): 177–197.

49. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion,* ch. 4.

50. Such a generalization of Lewis's model to New Testament cases of possession has already been criticized effectively in Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 2/54; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 150.

51. On the last point, see James G. Crossley, *Jesus in an Age of Neoliberalism: Quests, Scholarship, and Ideology* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012).

52. See especially Pieter F. Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective* (Matrix 3; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008); on Paul, see John Ashton, *The Religion of Paul the Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University, 2000).

53. Robert Hutton, *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London: Hambledon, 2001); and Kocku von Stuckrad, *Schamanismus und Esoterik: kultur- und wissenschaftgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (Gnostica 4; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2003); on Eliade's case, see Homayun Sidky, "On the Antiquity of Shamanism and its Role in Human Religiosity," *MTSR* 22 (2010): 68–92.

54. Consider the scathing words of Michael Taussig (himself responsible for the use of "shamanism" in ethnographic works that have had a certain influence of New Testament studies): "Shamanism is a made up, modern, western category, an artful reification of disparate practices, snatches of folklore and overarching folklorizations, residues of long-established myths intermingled with the politics of academic departments, curricula, conferences, journal juries and articles, and funding agencies." Quoted in Jane Monning Atkinson, "Shamanism Today," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 308.

55. On these accounts, see the (at times excessive) criticism of Craffert's book in Christian Strecker, "'The Duty of Discontent': Some Remarks on Pieter F. Craffert's *The Life of*

a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective," *JSHJ* 11 (2013): 251–280. On Ashton's book on Paul, see the critical comments in Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)*,* 166–170.

56. Lambek, "From Disease to Discourse," 45–46.

57. Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy.*

58. See, for instance, the lucid assessment of problems and opportunities in Colleen Shantz, "Opening the Black Box: New Prospects for Analyzing Religious Experience," in *Experientia, Volume 2: Linking Text and Experience,* ed. Colleen Shantz and R. A. Werline (Early Judaism and Its Literature 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 1–15.

59. For instance, Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew Newberg, *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), and Michael Winkelman, *Shamanism: The Neural Ecology of Consciousness and Healing* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvin, 2000) both play a significant role in building Shantz's theoretical foundations.

CHAPTER 1. BEELZEBUL AGAINST SATAN

1. Δαιμόνιον occurs twice in the materials that can be traced back to *Q,* in 7:33 as a charge addressed to John the Baptist and in 11:14–20, where Jesus is accused of exorcizing "demons" with the help of Beelzebul, the "prince" of demons. Mark has the plural (δαιμόνια) in passages that summarize the thaumaturgic and exorcistic activities of Jesus, of his disciples, and even of an anonymous competitor exorcist (1:32–39; 3:15; 6:13; 9:38). The plural appears again in Mk 3:22 (the parallel of the above-mentioned Q 11:14). The singular occurs in the episode of the exorcism of the Syro-Phoenician's daughter (Mk 7:26–30) and the verb δαιμονίζω—always used in passive forms—appears in Mk 1:32 and in the final verses of the pericope of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:16–20).

2. As observed years ago in a seminal article by Jonathan Z. Smith, even such genealogical reasoning (which is admittedly quite pervasively used in introductory treatments of the subject matter) falls prey to a logical fallacy that obscures the fundamentally taxonomic nature of these terminological distinctions. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Antiquity," ANRW II.16.1 (1978): 425–439.

3. Despite an unreliable distinction between a Hellenistic and a biblical use of the terminology, Werner Foerster offers a still very valuable review of the ancient occurrences *sub voce* "δαίμων" in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament,* ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932–1979), vol. 4, pp. 1–21.

4. The patterns of usage of this terminology in the early Roman period are conveniently summarized and analyzed in Frederick E. Brenk, "In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period," ANRW II.16.3 (1986): 2068–2145, and in Jacques Puiggali, "Δαίμων et les mots de la même famille chez Aelius Aristides," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 36 (1985): 123–126; and Puiggali, "La démonologie de Celse, penseur médio-platonicien," *Les Etudes Classiques* 55 (1987): 17–40.

5. In an otherwise important article, Dale B. Martin puts aside Philo's and Josephus's materials stating that their demonologies are not particularly "Jewish" and too "Greek"

(here 671–673), a move that reinscribes unfortunate theological distinctions between Judaism and Hellenism. See Martin, "When Did Angels Become Demons?" *JBL* 129 (2010): 657–677.

6. This happens in *On the Eternity of the World* 47, where he criticizes those who attribute incorruptible nature to the stars ἢ θείας ἢ δαιμονίας φύσεις νομίζοντας ("judging them to be either divine or 'demonic' beings").

7. In *Embassy to Gaius* 65, Philo mentions the "demons" of Gaius's deceased wife, while discussing—with particularly dark humor—the murder of the emperor's father-in-law: πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς δαίμοσι τῆς ἀποθανούσης γυναικός, εἰ πατέρα μὲν ἐκείνης ἑαυτοῦ δὲ γενόμενον πενθερὸν μεταστήσεται, δολοφονεῖ ("[Gaius] killed treacherously [Marcus Silanus], as if he were to send 'many greetings' to the spirits of the deceased wife by dispatching her father, who had also become his father-in-law").

8. For instance, in *Jewish Antiquities* 13,317, describing Aristobulus's regret for the murder of his brother Antigonus: καὶ μέχρι τίνος, ὦ σῶμα ἀναιδέστατον, ψυχὴν ὀφειλομένην ἀδελφοῦ καὶ μητρὸς καθέξεις δαίμοσιν; ("Until when, oh most dishonorable body, will you retain a soul that is owed to the spirits of the brother and the mother?").

9. See *Jewish Antiquities* 8,45, in which Josephus tells that God granted to the king the knowledge of τὴν κατὰ τῶν δαιμόνων τέχνην ("the skill [to fight] against the demons"). This instance is all the more telling inasmuch as Josephus goes on—in the same paragraph—to call the exorcists οἱ ἐνδούμενοι τὰ δαιμόνια ("Those who bind the demons").

10. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 1,69.

11. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 6,252.

12. *Acts of John* 41: πᾶν εἴδωλον φεύγει καὶ πᾶς δαίμων, πᾶσα δύναμίς τε καὶ πᾶσα ἀκάθαρτος φύσις. See J. D. Kaestli and E. Jonod, eds., *Acta Johannis* (Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 1; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1983), 221.

13. *Acts of John* 84: ὦ πρέμνον τὸν λόγον δαίμονα ἔχοντα. Kaestli and Jonod, eds., *Acta Johannis,* 289.

14. See, for instance, James B. Rives, "Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology," in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Explanation,* ed. W. V. Harris (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 27; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15–41.

15. See, for instance, the cases studied in Heidi Marx-Wolf, "Third-Century Daimonologies and the *Via Universalis:* Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus on *Daimones* and Other Angels," *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010): 207–215.

16. David Frankfurter, "Master-Demons, Local Spirits, and Demonology in the Roman Mediterranean World: An Afterword to Rita Lucarelli," *JANER* 11 (2011): 127.

17. On these dynamics, see also David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 2006), 24–28.

18. It is worth mentioning that on Mk 7:25 (the exorcism of the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman) the manuscripts are in disagreement, since the majority read "a woman whose daughter had a πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον," while a few others (and notably P[45], a third-century papyrus that is basically the only witness to the Gospel of

Mark dated before the time of Constantine) have "a woman, whose daughter had ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ." The Greek of the latter reading is atrocious and one could rightly say that is meaningless, but it is worth considering whether P⁴⁵ might have preserved the traces of an incomplete attempt to improve an original text that looked more or less like the other Markan texts mentioned above. There is a distinct possibility that here too the original reading might have been the usual ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ.

19. Joel Marcus invokes the Semitic background but then goes on to say that the phrase "should be taken more literally" (!) to mean that "the man has been swallowed up by its possessing spirit" (342). He states that "we should not look for too much consistency when dealing with things as ambivalent and protean as demonic spirits," but one may wonder whether the same treatment ought to be given to grammar too; obviously, Marcus goes on to translate Mk 5:26 as "a woman who *had* a flow of blood." Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (The Anchor Bible 27; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 187, 342, 355.

20. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), *sub voce* ἐν.

21. For instance, in P.Petr 2 11 (Alexandria, middle III BCE) at the end of a brief letter Polykrates asks his father Kleon to write back ἵνα εἰδῶμεν ἐν οἷς εἶ ("so that we may know in what conditions you are").

22. The most notable case is that of Peter's mother-in-law, whose fever is healed by Jesus through an exorcistic "rebuke" in Lk 4:38–39.

23. For instance, P.Tebt 41 (105–90 BCE) relates the violence of the *topogrammateus* Marres on the villagers of Kerkeosiris: Μαρρείους τοπογραμματέως σὺν ἄλλοις πλείοσι ἐν μαχαίραις παρ[α]γινομένου εἰς τὴν κώμην ("the *topogrammateus* Marres came into the village with many others armed with swords"). John Charles Doudna thinks that this occurrence and other similar instances might be considered instances of dative used as locative, but clearly in a heavily metaphorical way. Doudna, *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1961), 24–25.

24. A comparable New Testament use occurs in Lk 22:49 in the Gethsemane episode, when those who are with Jesus ask him whether they have to strike the guards coming to arrest him "with swords" (Κύριε, εἰ πατάξομεν ἐν μαχαίρῃ).

25. Mk 1:8 raises important textual critical problems in itself, since several manuscripts add ἐν in front of ὕδατι or take it away before "holy spirit." However, a balanced evaluation of the relative weight of the witnesses indicates that the text printed in Nestle-Aland should be considered original; see the discussion in Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 63.

26. Treating the holy spirit here as pure instrument is also theologically unsatisfactory for many commentators, who thus resort to less grammatically grounded translations, such as "by the power of" or similar. In this case, one should seriously consider treating this phrase as referring to possession, similar to what will be done for the Pauline expressions ἐν πνεύματι and ἐν Χριστῷ, which will be examined in later chapters. That the episode of Jesus's baptism is described in the Gospels as an instance of posses-

sion has been argued convincingly by several scholars; see, for instance, Craffert, *Life of a Galilean Shaman,* 213–244.

27. Εἶχεν τὸ θυγάτριον αὐτῆς πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον; for this verse, however, see the text-critical problems mentioned in a previous footnote.

28. Ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σέ, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον; later on (in v. 25) the spirit is designated as "impure" and rebuked by Jesus.

29. Jesus is accused of "having Beelzebul" in 3:22 in the context of a polemical pericope that will be examined in greater detail in the next section.

30. Famously and provocatively, Lambek observes that "possession is an institutional, socially legitimated and rule-bound context for, among other things, trance in somewhat the way that marriage forms a context for, among other things, sex." Lambek, "From Disease to Discourse," 45–46.

31. Paul C. Johnson, "Toward an Atlantic Genealogy of 'Spirit Possession,'" in *Spirited Things,* ed. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 23–45.

32. Michael Lambek, "Afterword," in *Spirited Things,* ed. Johnson, 261–262.

33. For the statement of a Candomblé practitioner who describes himself as master of his spirit, see Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomblé* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 20. At the same time, an Umbanda priestess can affirm that she has no free choice and she is a "slave" of the spirit. See Kelly E. Hayes, *Holy Harlots: Femininity, Sexuality, and Black Magic in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 12; but see also Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

34. Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978), 104.

35. Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1995), 91.

36. Craffert, *Life of a Galilean Shaman*, 231–232; I interpret the alternative label proposed by Craffert ("being spirit-possessed") as pointing toward the ambiguity of "spirit possession" described by Lambek above.

37. Matthew has also a briefer version of the charge—coming from the Pharisees—in 9:32–34 without Jesus's responses, but it is clearly a product of the redactional activity of Matthew.

38. Such a conclusion assumes the overall validity of the two-sources hypothesis: the presence in Q 11:14–22 (Mt 12:22–29 // Lk 11:14–22) of verses 19–20 that are notably missing in Mark renders improbable a dependency of the latter on the Sayings Gospel. For a thorough discussion of the literary relationship between these accounts and an updated bibliography on the issue, see Michael Labahn, "The 'Dark Side of Power'—Beelzebul: Manipulated or Manipulator? Reflections on the History of a Conflict in the Traces Left in the Memory of Its Narrators," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus, 4, Individual Studies,* ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2911–2945.

39. Another exception, based on ethnographic materials, is Strecker, "Jesus and the Demoniacs," 125–126, even though he unhelpfully reads Jesus's possession as a manifestation of "some higher power," which makes of him—immediately and without further

explanation—"a medium of divine power." Even Joel Marcus, author of one of the most precise analyses of the pericope and someone who does not appear shy of speculating even about the trajectory of Jesus's own thoughts in matters of eschatology, does not go beyond the statement that "the exorcist inhabits a dangerously liminal space by the mere fact of his commerce with the demons, and this commerce may either lead to his own possession or testify that he is already possessed" (263). Marcus, "The Beelzebul Controversy and the Eschatologies of Jesus," in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus,* ed. B. Chilton and C. A. Evans (New Testament Tools and Studies 28/2; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 247–277, 263. Striking is the silence on this point throughout J. P. Meier's *Marginal Jew.*

40. Unless otherwise noted, the New Testament texts are taken from the critical edition in NA28.

41. Unless otherwise noted, the Q texts are taken from the reconstruction printed in J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, and J. S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

42. See, for instance, Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 228.

43. For two recent analyses, see George Aichele, "Jesus' Uncanny 'Family Scene,'" *JSNT* 74 (1999): 29–48, and—far more sensitive to the cultural context of the narrative—Dietmar Neufeld, "Eating, Ecstasy, and Exorcism," *BTB* 26 (1996): 152–162.

44. The similarities are even more pronounced when one looks at another polemical passage in Q 7:33, in which Jesus reproaches "this generation" for having considered John the Baptist possessed: ἦλθεν γὰρ Ἰωάννης μὴ ἐσθίων μήτε πίνων καὶ λέγετε δαιμόνιον ἔχει ("for John came, neither eating nor drinking, and you say 'he has a demon'").

45. Besides the obvious case of Craffert (*Life of a Galilean Shaman,* 227–228), two recent instances are Esther Miquel, "How to Discredit an Inconvenient Exorcist: Origin and Configuration of the Synoptic Controversies on Jesus' Power as an Exorcist," *BTB* 40 (2010): 199; and Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist,* 111–112 (with a particularly effective criticism of James Dunn's biased treatment of the point).

46. Instructive is the case of Joel Marcus, who—against no less an authority than that of Rudolf Bultmann—states, with the support of a wealth of anthropological literature, that exorcists inhabit "a dangerously liminal space" which might lead to their own possession, but never goes further than this. See Marcus, "Beelzebul Controversy," 263–264.

47. "Brothers, a spirit in me revealed" (*Acts of John* 84, in *Acta Johannis,* eds. Kaestli and Jonod, 293).

48. *Acts of John* 46.

49. For an edition of the text with a detailed description of the codex, see François Bovon and Bertrand Bouvier, "Un fragment grec inédit des *Actes de Pierre?*" *Apocrypha* 17 (2006): 9–54.

50. The complex issue of distinguishing the good from bad spirit possession is obviously a problem present almost anywhere cross-culturally and also in the early Christ groups, as attested already by Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians.* The theme will be exam-

ined in detail in the last chapter of this book, but its relevance cannot be surprising, given the ambiguous nature of the spirits. In the specific case of the fragment under examination here, the challenge of the "chief-demon" is all the more curious, since he declares in the very same sentence that he was present at the moment of Peter's denial because the girl who interrogated the apostle was in fact the demon's "vessel" (σκεῦος)!

51. The editors of the fragment conclude that Peter traces a circle around the demons and then marks it all around with crosses, but the passage is undoubtedly difficult and maybe the Greek is corrupted. Bovon and Bouvier, "Un Fragment," 34–36.

52. "When the impure spirit has left the person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting-place, and finds none. [Then] it says 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And on arrival it finds it swept and tidied up. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and, moving in, they settle there. And the last situation of that person becomes worse than the first." On this saying, see the very good analysis provided by Stuckenbruck, who however—after having defended its association with the historical Jesus—less convincingly tries to show that it might be consistent with the idea that Jesus's exorcisms usher the arrival of God's kingdom. Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of the Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts* (WUNT 335; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 175.

53. The same fundamental dynamics is operative in several recipes included in the so-called *Papyri Graecae Magicae,* where "spirits" are called upon to provide services of the most diverse natures, ranging from harming enemies to generate love in another person and assisting in the identification of thieves. However, those recipes do not normally include "spirit possession" in the sense examined here, even though the Petrine fragment discussed above does illustrate how blurred the boundaries in this respect can be.

54. On possession as a "way of knowing," see Michael Lambek, *Knowledge and Practice in Mayotte: Local Discourses of Islam, Sorcery, and Spirit Possession* (Anthropological Horizons 3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

55. Manduhai Buyandelgeriyn, "Who 'Makes' the Shaman? The Politics of Shamanic Practices among the Buriats in Mongolia," *Inner Asia* 1 (1999): 221–244, but see also Morten A. Pedersen, *Not Quite Shamans: Spirit Worlds and Political Lives in Northern Mongolia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

56. This is the first mention of "parables" in Mark, but the presentation of Jesus speaking "in parables" to his audiences is unanimously recognized as a redactional hallmark of the second Gospel. See Collins, *Mark,* 231–232.

57. For a good analysis of the rhetorical structure of the passage, see Vernon K. Robbins, "Rhetorical Composition and the Beelzebul Controversy," in *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels,* ed. B. L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1989), 161–193.

58. Or one can simply dismiss the verses as done by Geert Van Oyen, who summarizes Jesus's words like this: "So what? What are you worried about? Let me do as I like to do, as long as the outcome will be that Satan will be beaten" (here 110). Van Oyen,

"Demons and Exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark," in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity,* ed. N. Vos and W. Otten (SupplVChr 108; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 110.

59. For instance, Amanda Witmer does not even mention these verses in her rather long treatment of the Beelzebul episode. Witmer, *Jesus,* 109–129.

60. The scholarly positions and the related evidence are conveniently summarized in Wolfgang Herrmann, *sub voce* "Baal-zebul" in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. K. Van Der Toorn et al., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 154–156.

61. The wordplay is picked up and rendered intelligible for a Greek audience by Josephus, who in his retelling of the episode in *Jewish Antiquities* 9,19 calls the god τὴν Ἀκκάρων θεὸν Μυῖαν ("the goddess Fly of Akkaron").

62. Douglas L. Penney and Michael O. Wise have suggested that the Aramaic version of the name could be reconstructed on a Qumranic fragment. Penney and Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran [4Q560]," *JBL* 113 (1994): 627–650. Emile Puech, however, declares such a reading impossible. Puech, *Qumran Grotte 4. XXVII: Textes en Araméen, deuxième partie* (DJD 37; Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 296n7.

63. This seems to be a more economic explanation than the highly complex proposal put forth recently by Tord Fornberg, "Baal-zevul—the History of a Name," in *L'Adversaire de Dieu/Der Widersacher Gottes,* ed. M. Tilly, M. Morgenstern, and V. Henning Drecoll (WUNT 364; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2016), 95–106.

64. See the materials collected in Peggy L. Day and Cilliers Breytenbach, *sub voce* Satan, even though the near-total absence of references to the Qumran documents limits the usefulness of the entry. Day and Breytenbach, "Satan," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* ed. Van Der Toorn et al., 2nd ed., 726–732.

65. Stuckenbruck, *Myth*, 94–95.

66. See the discussion of this passage in Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* 95.

67. See, for instance, the description of the blessed state of humankind in the end time: "They will complete and live their entire lifetimes peacefully and joyfully. There will be neither a satan nor any evil one who will destroy. For their entire lifetimes will be times of blessing and healing." *Jubilees* 23:29, in James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (CSCO 511; Scriptores Aethiopici 88; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1989), 149; for similar occurrences, see also 40:9; 46:2; 50:5.

68. "All of the evil ones who were savage we tied up in the place of judgment, while we left a tenth of them to exercise power on the earth before the satan." *Jubilees* 10:11, VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees,* 60.

69. In the famous answer of Jesus to Peter, who has been shocked by the prophecy of the Passion: "Get out of my sight, satan, because you do not set your mind on the affairs of God, but on human affairs." Mk 8:33; see Collins, *Mark,* 407.

70. In the short Markan mention of Jesus's "temptation" ("And he was in the wilderness forty days, being put to the test by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving him," Mk 1:13), the tester is called "Satan" with a determinative article. The longer Q account of this episode (Q 4:1–13) designates the adversary of

Jesus—in a more Septuagintal way—as ὁ διάβολος, literally "the accuser" or "the slanderer."

71. Marcus notes that the argument of Jesus in these verses (as he understands it) "would have no force unless the equivalence were accepted by both sides in the dispute," but the best he can say is that Beelzebul "had probably become an alternate name for Satan" at this time. "Beelzebul Controversy," 247n2. John P. Meier leaves a similar admission buried in one of his footnotes ("Theoretically possible, however, in the confusing and variegated world of demonology is the interpretation that Satan is indeed the king of the 'kingdom' of demons, while Beelzebul is one of his subordinate ruling princes") and then goes on to discount it in a very gracious—but not at all scientific—way: "Perhaps the Beelzebul complex [sic!] in the Synoptics reflects similar ideas about the reign of Satan/Beelzebul over a kingdom of demons, ideas held by Jewish peasants in Palestine around the turn of the era. Naturally, the last thing we should look for in popular beliefs about Satan and demons is the consistency of systematic theology." in Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles,* Vol. 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 462–463n40.

72. See Elaine Pagels, "The Social History of Satan, the 'Intimate Enemy': A Preliminary Sketch," *HTR* 84 (1991): 105–128; however, the overall historical reconstruction—based as it is on a binary opposition between canonical and apocryphal Jewish texts—might be problematic.

73. Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires: Yetzer Hara and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

74. On Q's attention for hierarchies as evidence of the bureaucratic ethos behind the Sayings Gospel's political theology, see Giovanni B. Bazzana, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy: The Political Theology of Village Scribes in the Sayings Gospel Q* (BETL 274; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2015).

75. See Philip Sellew, "Beelzebul in Mark 3: Dialogue, Story, or Saying Cluster," *Forum: Foundations and Facets* 4 (1988): 106; and John J. Rousseau, "Jesus, an Exorcist of a Kind," *SBLSP* (1993): 151 (even though Rousseau's categories have to be treated with great care).

76. Moxnes comes closer than many others to seeing the distinction between Beelzebul and Satan, but his conclusions are undermined by his assumption that the pericope can only be a charge moved by the opponents of Jesus and that he must reject the label of "otherness" that might come with Beelzebul. However, this leads even Moxnes to misinterpret the actual cultural dynamics of possession and ultimately to read Jesus's exorcisms as allegorical presentations of a political contrast. Moxnes, "Ethnography," 338–339.

77. For a classic analysis of this feature of possession in the case of the *zar* cults of northern Sudan, see Janice Boddy, "Spirits and Selves in Northern Sudan: The Cultural Therapeutics of Possession and Trance," *American Ethnologist* 15 (1988): 4–27. However, this is a widespread feature of African spirit possession, one that is very much present in the Caribbean and in Brazil as well: see, for instance, Raquel Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin:

University of Texas Press, 2003). The theme will be treated more in detail in the next chapter.

78. It might be interesting to speculate that the extraneous character of the "spirits" is maintained, for instance, in the recipes for the control of demons that occur in the later compilations, usually called *Papyri Graecae Magicae,* by assigning foreign names to them. Certainly the *voces barbarae* that pop up all over the place in these papyri bear witness to the surplus of "magical" power and authority that is always attached to unintelligible utterances. Nevertheless, one should not discount the foreignizing effect (in the Egyptian context in which these "magical" handbooks on papyrus were produced) carried by Hebrew—or Hebrew-sounding—names: see, for instance, the "love spell" attributed to Astrapsoukos (preserved on the fourth- or fifth-century PGM 8) in which Hermes is bound to serve because the person reciting the prayer "knows his barbaric names" (lines 20–21, οἶδά σου καὶ τὰ βαρβαρικὰ ὀνόματα, Φαρναθαρ Βαραχήλ Χθα).

79. Diana Espírito Santo, "Imagination, Sensation, and the Education of Attention among Cuban Spirit Mediums," *Ethnos* 77 (2012): 252–271.

80. That "spirits" become present in the medium's body calls for an alternative definition of the latter, one not based on an ontological binary matter/spirit. Espírito Santo provides it by drawing from Bruno Latour's understanding of the body as "an interface that becomes more and more describable as it learns to be affected by more and more elements." Espírito Santo, "How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies," *Body and Society* 10 (2004): 205–229.

81. See also Stephan Palmié, "*Fascinans* or *Tremendum?* Permutations of the State, the Body, and the Divine in Late-Twentieth-Century Havana," *New West Indian Guide* 78 (2004): 229–268.

82. Adeline Masquelier, "From Hostage to Host: Confessions of a Spirit Medium in Niger," *Ethos* 30 (2002): 49–76.

83. Masquelier, "From Hostage to Host," 71.

84. Marcus, "Beelzebul Controversy," 265–270.

85. As for Marcus's reading, there cannot be any sensible claim that the tradition of the Beelzebul controversy goes back to the exact moment of Jesus's first possession experience or to the exact reasoning through which he produced his own subjectivity as an exorcist. As the ethnographic examples mentioned above should have made clear, such production is the result of a long and often incoherent process. Such fundamental ambiguity is reflected in the convoluted and fragmentary argument developed by Jesus in this pericope. As in many other cases within the Synoptic materials, we should consider ourselves lucky that these "unsystematic" rhetorical arrangements have been preserved. Marcus, "Beelzebul Controversy," 275n87.

86. "In the version of shamanism popularized in a trajectory following Eliade and Harner the abbreviation 'ASC' has become popular, highlighting the centrality of 'Altered States of Consciousness.' This sums up a range of the problems of an interiorizing interpretation that devotes most attention to individuals and their consciousness. It is proposed here to re-use the abbreviation 'ASC' to refer to 'Adjusted Styles of Communication.' Shamans are persons (human or otherwise perhaps) who learn to com-

municate across species boundaries within a richly animate world full of persons who deserve respect but who might be eaten and might aggress, and who might control and be controlled." Graham Harvey, "Animism rather than Shamanism: New Approaches to What Shamans Do [for Other Animists]," in *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* ed. B. E. Schmidt and L. Huskinson (London: Continuum, 2010), 31. This methodological switch indirectly highlights the shortcomings of other approaches adopted in New Testament studies.

87. The association between kingdom and household cannot be surprising, since it was common in antiquity to consider monarchic rule as an extension of the authority of a householder over the household both in terms of the moral virtues required for the job and the hierarchical organization of the two social structures. For a discussion of these political-theological themes in Q, see Bazzana, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy,* ch. 6.

88. That the entire pericope is about theological political authority is also noted in Van Oyen, "Demons and Exorcisms," 111.

89. Lk 11:21–22 Ὅταν ὁ ἰσχυρὸς καθωπλισμένος φυλάσσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ αὐλήν, ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἐστὶν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ· ἐπὰν δὲ ἰσχυρότερος αὐτοῦ ἐπελθὼν νικήσῃ αὐτόν, τὴν πανοπλίαν αὐτοῦ αἴρει ἐφ᾽ ᾗ ἐπεποίθει καὶ τὰ σκῦλα αὐτοῦ διαδίδωσιν ("When a strong one, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder"). On the Lukan flavor of these terms, see Simon Légasse, "L' 'homme fort' de Luc 11,21–22," *NT* 5 (1962): 5–9.

90. The evaluators of *The Critical Edition of Q* concur with this conclusion by signaling that something must have been in Q 11:21–22 but also that no part of the Q wording can be reconstructed with any certainty (against the early opinion of the *International Q Project* that had proposed for Q a text similar to Lk 11:21–22 and against the dissenting opinion of Paul Hoffmann, who prefers a text largely modeled on Mk 3:27).

91. Collins, *Mark,* 233–234.

92. Collins suggests that Jesus "binds" Satan ("the strong one," ὁ ἰσχυρός) because he is "the stronger one" (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος), as announced by John the Baptist in Mk 1:7. However, such christological nuance seems unwarranted for the earlier version of the saying as it is preserved in Mk 3:27. Indeed, there is no mention here of a "stronger one," and actually Luke might have inserted it in his rewriting (Lk 11:22) because he had picked up exegetically the potential reference to Mk 1:7, which he had already included in the depiction of John's proclamation in Lk 3:16.

93. *1 Enoch* 10:4–8.

94. Christopher A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion,* ed. Christopher A. Faraone and D. Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3–32.

95. The best-known occurrence of this use in the New Testament is certainly 2 Cor 4:7, in which the "treasure" that people currently have in "clay jars" (ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) is usually construed to be their "souls" (for a similar Pauline reference to the human body, see also 1 Thes 4:4). Such usage emphasizes passivity and lack of agency: indeed, Polybius can employ σκεύη to designate accomplices who are mobilized as veritable "instruments" in carrying out a political plot (in *Histories* 13,5,7 the

spy Damokles is designated as an ὑπηρετικὸν σκεῦος εὐφυές, "a well-suited menial instrument").

96. Annette Merz, "Jesus lernt vom Räuberhauptmann (Das Wort vom Starken)," in *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu,* ed. R. Zimmermann (Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher, 2007), 291.

97. On these "problematic" texts, see Tim Schramm and Kathrin Löwenstein, *Unmoralische Helden: anstössige Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); and Giovanni B. Bazzana, "Violence and Human Prayer to God in Q 11," *HTS* 70 (2014): 1–8.

98. Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: a Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 125–141. Moxnes's understanding of the ideological construction of spatial representations depends on a theoretical genealogy that goes back to Henri Lefebvre, but as far as possession is concerned, the most proximate anthropological conversation partner is Michael T. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

99. Merz, "Jesus," 292–295.

100. Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place,* 137. Later he goes on to state that "if becoming possessed could be a coping mechanism, a way to internalize a situation that could not be fixed, *exorcisms* were a way to interact with the broader situation." This point will be taken up more extensively in the next chapter.

101. One thinks of Johnson's reflections on the modern genealogy of possession in connection with slavery or of the characterization of mediums as "mounts" of their "spirits" in west African possession cults. Johnson, "Toward an Atlantic Genealogy of 'Spirit Possession.'" See also J. Lorand Matory, "Government by Seduction: History and Tropes of 'Mounting' in the Oyo-Yoruba," in *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* ed. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 58–85.

102. Zakaria Rhani, *Le pouvoir de guérir: mythe, mystique et politique au Maroc* (Studies in the History and Society of the Maghrib 5; Leiden: Brill, 2014); and Mohammed Maarouf, *Jinn Eviction as a Discourse of Power: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Moroccan Magical Beliefs and Practices* (Islam in Africa 8; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

103. Zakaria Rhani, "Le chérif et la possédée: sainteté, rituel et pouvoir au Maroc," *L'homme* 190 (2009): 27–50.

104. Rhani, "Le chérif," 36.

105. "Mais aujourd'hui certains reconnaissent même la force de ma baraka et que mes *mlouk* sont *rabbaniyîn* ["divine spirits"]. Je n'ai pas choisi d'être possédée. Je ne suis en fait qu'une *khashba* ["vessel"] à travers laquelle des ésprits se prononcent sur la maladie et l'avenir." Rhoni, "La chérif," 36.

106. Another example worth mentioning here is that of the justice "court" of "spirits" as a means to exorcize malevolent beings, which is attested in India as well as in Morocco. On the latter, see Mohammed Maarouf, "Saints and Social Justice in Morocco: An Ethnographic Case of the Mythic Court of Sidi Samharus," *Arabica* 57 (2010): 589–670.

107. For a series of impressive arguments and literature in support of "spirit," see however Harry T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (BiTS 1; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2005)*,* 483–484. Either option on the matter of reconstruction has little impact on the argument developed here.

108. A classic instance of this approach, which goes back at least to Bultmann, in Theodor Lorenzmeier, "Zum Logion Mt 12,28; Lk 11,20," in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz: Festschrift für Herbert Braun zum 70. Geburtstag am 4. Mai 1973,* ed. H. D. Betz and L. Schottroff (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr, 1973), 289–304.

109. Heikki Räisänen, "Exorcisms and the Kingdom: Is Q 11:20 a Saying of the Historical Jesus?" in *Symbols and Strata: Essays on the Sayings Gospel Q,* ed. R. Uro (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 65; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 119–142.

110. For instance by Michael Labahn, who however endorses almost all of Räisänen's points of redactional criticism, so that his claim rests ultimately only on a common-sense appreciation of what one would expect Jesus's views on eschatology and exorcisms to have been. Labahn, "Jesu Exorzismen (Q 11,19–20) und die Erkenntnis der ägyptischen Magier (Ex 8,15): Q 11,20 als bewahrtes Beispiel für Schrift-Rezeption Jesu nach der Logienquelle," in *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus,* ed. A. Lindemann (BETL 158; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2001), 617–633.

111. See the incisive criticism in Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, *Jesus Among Her Children: Q, Eschatology, and the Construction of Christian Origins* (Harvard Theological Studies 55; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2005), 165–168, but see also Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place,* 134–136.

112. Usually in association with the polemic against "this generation," a phrase that, however, should never be considered a stand-in for Judaism in Q. See Markus Tiwald, "Hat Gott sein Haus verlassen (vgl. Q 13,35)? Das Verhältnis der Logienquelle zum Frühjudentum," in *Kein Jota wird vergehen: das Gesetzesverständnis der Logienquelle vor dem Hintergrund frühjüdischer Theologie,* ed. Markus Tiwald (BWANT 200; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 63–88.

113. Bazzana, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy,* 208–210.

114. Most likely depending on Ex 8:15 (8:19 LXX) according to Martin Hengel, "Der Finger und die Herrschaft Gottes in Lk 11,20," in *La main de Dieu / Die Hand Gottes,* ed. R. Kieffer and J. Bergman (WUNT 94; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997), 87–106; and Labahn, "Jesu Exorzismen," 628–630.

115. For the (very limited) parallels in "magical" literature, see Pieter W. van der Horst, "'The Finger of God': Miscellaneous Notes on Luke 11:20 and Its *Umwelt,*" in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical, Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda,* ed. W. L. Petersen, J. S. Vos, and H. J. De Jonge (SupplNT 89; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 99–100. Van den Horst, however, concludes that Ex 8 constitutes the most likely model for Lk 11:20.

116. See the literature in Fleddermann, *Q,* 488n62.

117. Michael Labahn, "Füll den Raum aus—es kommt sonst noch schlimmer! (Beelzebulgleichnis)," in *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu*, ed. R. Zimmermann (Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher, 2007), 126–132.

118. Otto Böcher, *Christus Exorcista: Dämonismus und Taufe im Neuen Testament* (BWANT 5/16; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972), 17.

119. This is almost naturally the result of Labahn's treatment of the saying as a "parable," but see also, in a similar vein, the discussions in François Bovon, *Luke 2* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 124–126 and Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 220–222.

120. Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* 184.

121. "Original" in this case can only be used in a very relative sense, since it is hardly possible that a single, chronologically primary version of the pericope ever existed. Mark and Q witness to at least two versions that have an equal claim to priority, and many other variants might have existed but are now lost.

122. For an assessment of the so-called "temptation" story, see Bazzana, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy,* 200–202; and Christopher M. Tuckett, "The Temptation Narrative in Q," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck,* ed. F. Van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden (BETL 100; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1992), 1:479–507.

123. On Jesus's scriptural competency in this episode, see Thomas Hieke, "Schriftgelehrsamkeit in der Logienquelle: die alttestamentliche Zitate der Versuchungsgeschichte Q 4,1–13," in *From Quest to Q: Festschrift James M. Robinson,* ed. J. M. Asgeirsson, K. De Troyer, M. W. Meyer (BETL 146; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 43–71.

124. This seems to be the case for Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* 171–172.

125. Confusingly, Moxnes attributes the christological focus of vv. 19–20 to Mark (in which these verses are absent) and then goes on to see the true Q understanding of the meaning of Jesus's exorcisms in the redactionally impossible construction of vv. 17–19 + 20b. Moxnes, "Ethnography," 337–338.

126. Jörg Frey, "How Did the Spirit Become a Person?" in *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity: Multidisciplinary Perspectives,* ed. Jörg Frey and J. R. Levison (Ekstasis 5; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 352–353, even though it is not clear how this might have any relevance for the historical Jesus.

127. On the Pharisees in Matthew, see Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). The insertion of the Pharisees at this point in Matthew might have been favored by the fact that the Q tirade against the same Pharisees followed immediately in Q 11:39–44.

128. See the recent comments in Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, "Did Jesus Act Alone? A Response to Paul Verhoeven," *Fourth R* 25 (2012): 17–24, including her remarks on Bruno LaTour's analysis of the treatment of Louis Pasteur in the history of science.

129. This is the only criticism that can be lodged against the otherwise impressive discussion in Miquel, "How to Discredit."

CHAPTER 2. A GHOST AMONG THE TOMBS

1. Famously, for instance, Fyodor Dostoyevsky put Lk 8:32–37 in the epigraph of his darkest and most violent novel, *Devils.*

2.   In Bultmann's fundamental *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 210–211, which Collins refers to in her commentary on Mark, and in Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 321.

3.   Probably starting with the groundbreaking work of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977).

4.   Another symptom of this problematic bias is to claim that "impure spirit" is a specifically Semitic way of speaking about demons, a stance that Clinton Wahlen convincingly showed to be groundless. Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (WUNT 2/185; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2004), 24–68.

5.   But see the case of P. Fouad 203, published in Pierre Benoit, "Fragment d'une prière contre les esprits impurs?" *RB* 58 (1951): 549–565.

6.   For an exception, see the formula ὁρκίζω ὑμᾶς ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα (the same phrase used by the "spirit" in Mk 5:7!) in PGM P 10, line 21, in a very damaged spot in a Christian amulet dated to the fourth century CE; for the dating, see Hans Förster, "Alltag und Kirche," in *Christliches mit Feder und Faden: Christliches in Texten, Textilien und Alltagsgegenständen aus Ägypten,* ed. J. Henner, H. Förster, and U. Horak (Nilus 3; Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999), n. 36; for the Christian elements (*nomina sacra*), see Theodore de Bruyn and Jitse Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets," *BASP* 48 (2011): 188–189. The "evil spirit" is mentioned in another amulet, P.Turner 49 (for a new edition, see Suppl. Mag. 1 31) of unknown provenance and dated to the fifth or sixth century. In line 4, after a mention of the creedal formula and of the *historiola* of Jesus's healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the author asks Jesus to heal the wearer of the amulet from a series of illnesses, including "every evil eye and every evil spirit" (ἀπὸ πάσης βασκοσύνης κ[αὶ] ἀπὸ παντὸς πν[εύμ]α[τος] πονηροῦ, written as a *nomen sacrum!*).

7.   For a discussion of *rwḥ ḥṭmʾh* in Zc 13:2, see Armin Lange, "Considerations Concerning the 'Spirit of Impurity' in Zech 13:2," in *Die Dämonen—Demons: Die Dämonologie des israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt—The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in the Context of Their Environment,* ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. F. D. Römheld (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003), 254–268.

8.   See the *edition princeps* of the fragments with a detailed commentary by Esther G. Chazon in *Poetic and Liturgical Texts 2: Qumran Cave 4, volume 20* (DJD 29; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 370–375.

9.   The text is taken from James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPsa)* (DJD 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 40.

10. *Contra* Sanders's edition, I adopt the reading *bʿwyh* ("transgression") over against *bʿwwh* ("ruin") following the observations of Lange, "Considerations," 260n32.

11. "Satan" is used repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible as a generic designation, but it occurs already in *Jubilees* as the name of the ruler of the antidivine world; see the passages mentioned in Lange, "Considerations," 261, as well as the fuller discussion in the preceding chapter.

12. Sanders, *Psalms Scroll,* 76.

13. The fragments were originally published by Maurice Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte 4, III (4Q482–4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 219–286; see also the new edition by Bilhah Nitzan, "Hymns from Qumran—4Q510–4Q511," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years,* ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 53–63.

14. 4Q510 I 4–5.

15. Indeed, such a conclusion could be strengthened if one were to follow Gideon Bohak in his reading of another important hymnic exorcism from Qumran (11Q11 or 11QA-pocryphal Psalms), which—in column 4 line 6—addresses Belial as "born from the seed of man and from the seed of the holy ones" (*mzrʿ hʾdm wmzrʿ hqdšym*). See Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008), 109. On the complex reconstruction of this text, see also Emile Puech, "11QPsApᵃ, un ritual d'exorcisme: essai de reconstruction," *RQ* 55 (1990): 377–408.

16. Philip S. Alexander, "'Wrestling Against Wickedness in High Places': Magic in the Worldview of the Qumran Community," in *The Scrolls and Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After,* ed. S. E. Porter and C. A. Evans (SupplJSPseud 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 318–337. An alternative explanation might be to suppose that the demons are not the surviving spirits of the giants but also those of their angelic fathers condemned to remain on earth after their sin: this possibility is developed in some later Christian texts but might well come from the Second Temple period too.

17. Taking the phrase *lmśkyl* to indicate not authorship but liturgical use as in Alexander, "Wrestling," 319, and Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic,* 107. On the responsibilities of the *maskil* (mainly doctrinal teaching and disciplining members of the community), who figures prominently in 1QS, see Carol A. Newsom, "The Sage in the Literature of Qumran: The Function of the Maskil," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East,* ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 373–382.

18. It is possible to imagine that 4Q444 might have worked in the same way and that it was recited by the *maskil* with the same goal of frightening away the spirits of impurity and the bastards; on this apotropaic mechanism, see Alexander, "Wrestling," 323–324; and Armin Lange, "The Essene Position on Magic and Divination," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995,* ed. M. Bernstein, F. García Martínez, and J. Kampen (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 431–433.

19. On the Davidic authorship of the text, see Emile Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques du rituel d'éxorcisme (11Q11)," in *Sapiential, Liturgical, and Poetical Texts from Qumran,* ed. D. K. Falk (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 160–181.

20. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic,* 108: "these hymns [. . .] should hardly be classified as 'magic.'"

21. W. John Lyons and Andy M. Reimer, "The Demonic Virus and Qumran Studies: Some Preventative Measures," *DSD* 5 (1998): 16–32.

22. The link between exorcisms in the Synoptic Gospels and the enochic traditions that will be described here has been noted also in Archie T. Wright, "Evil Spirits in Second Temple Judaism: The *Watcher Tradition* as a Background to the Demonic Pericopes in the Gospels," *Henoch* 28 (2006): 141–159; Wright, however, treats the Gospel exorcisms

too generically, as if all of them were equally dependent on these strands of tradition. The link is defended also in Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* ch. 9.

23. Some authors (for instance, Lange, "Considerations," 262–263) add to the number of Second Temple Jewish parallels to the Markan use of "unclean spirits" also *Testament of Benjamin* 5:2: "If you do well, both the unclean spirits will flee from you and even the beasts will fear you." Harm W. Hollander and Marinus De Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: a Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 421. However, the similarities with the texts of the enochic traditions are too tenuous and the influence of the Synoptic use of the phrase too likely not to discount at least the possibility that this verse is a Christian creation.

24. Wright, "Evil Spirits," and Nicholas A. Elder, "Of Porcine and Polluted Spirits: Reading the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1–20) with the Book of Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1–36)," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 430–446.

25. In order to trace the trajectory of the fallen angels mytheme, the foundational stepping stone is now Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

26. 1 Enoch 7:1–3. The translation follows (with only minor modifications) the text reconstructed from several witnesses in George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 182–183.

27. See Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (TSAJ 63; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997); and Matthew Goff, "Monstrous Appetite: Giants, Cannibalism, and Insatiable Eating in Enochic Literature," *JAJ* 1 (2010): 19–42.

28. 1 Enoch 10:9 in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 215.

29. Several scholars have read behind this internal war a coded reference to the period of composition of the *Book of the Watchers* at the time of the conflicts among the *diadochoi* after the death of Alexander the Great: see most recently Joseph L. Angel, "Reading the Book of Giants in Literary and Historical Context," *DSD* 21 (2014): 313–346.

30. Thus, others have tried to link the story with controversies on purity and legitimacy of priestly lineages in the Hasmonean period; see for instance David W. Suter, "Fallen Angels, Fallen Priests: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 115–135. On the problems inherent in these attempts to provide historical context for the earliest layers of the Enochic traditions, see Pierluigi Piovanelli, "*Sitting by the Waters of Dan,* or the 'Tricky Business' of Tracing the Social Profile of the Communities That Produced the Earliest Enochic Texts," in *The Early Enoch Literature,* ed. G. Boccaccini and J. J. Collins (SupplJSJ 121; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 257–281.

31. The latter term occurs—as a remarkable instance of Semitism—in the Greek translation of the *Book of the Watchers* preserved in the *Codex Panopolitanus,* a papyrus from Upper Egypt dating to the end of the sixth century CE.

32. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 267.

33. I follow Nickelsburg in trusting the agreement between the Ethiopian and the Greek version of Syncellus (who has πονηρὰ πνεύματα at this point) against the reading "powerful" (ἰσχυρά) of *Codex Panopolitanus* (there is no surviving Aramaic fragment

for these verses). However, a reference to power in 15:8 might be original if one considers that πονηρά could have been interpolated here on the basis of the following verses or even of the New Testament use of the phrase "evil spirits." Wright suggests that the designation ἰσχυρὰ πνεύματα might be reflected in Mk 5 in the description of the superhuman strength of the Gerasene demoniac. Wright, "Evil Spirits," 145.

34. "For it was on account of these three things that the flood was on the earth, since (it was) due to the fornication that the Watchers had illicit intercourse—apart from the mandate of their authority—with women. When they married of them whomever they chose they committed the first (acts) of uncleanness." VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees,* 47.

35. 7:22–25. On the link between this narrative and that of *1 Enoch,* see Luca Arcari, "Illicit Unions, Hybrid Sonship, and Intermarriage in Second Temple Judaism—1 Enoch, Book of Giants, Jubilees," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature,* ed. A. Passaro (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012/2013), 405–454.

36. "God of the spirits which are in all animate beings—you who have shown kindness to me, saved me and my sons from the flood waters, and did not make me perish as you did to the people (meant for) destruction—because your mercy for me has been large and your kindness to me has been great: may your mercy be lifted over the children of your children; and may the wicked spirits not rule them in order to destroy them from the earth. Now you bless me and my children so that we may increase, become numerous, and fill the earth. You know how your Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, have acted during my lifetime. As for these spirits who have remained alive, imprison them and hold them captive in the place of judgment. May they not cause destruction among your servant's sons, my God, for they are savage and were created for the purpose of destroying. May they not rule the spirits of the living for you alone know their punishment; and may they not have power over the sons of the righteous from now and forevermore." 10:3–6, in VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees,* 58–59.

37. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees,* 60.

38. Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians* 24,5–6 and 25,1: καὶ αἱ τῶν γιγάντων ψυχαὶ οἱ περὶ τὸν κόσμον εἰσὶ πλανώμενοι δαίμονες ("And the souls of the giants are the demons who wander through the world"). On Athenagoras's views, see Dragos-Andrei Giulea, "The Watchers' Whispers: Athenagoras's *Legatio* 25,1–3 and the *Book of the Watchers,*" *VChr* 61 (2007): 258–281.

39. Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians* 27,2: Οἱ περὶ τὴν ὕλην δαίμονες, λίχνοι περὶ τὰς κνίσας καὶ τὸ τῶν ἱερείων αἷμα ὄντες, ἀπατηλοὶ δὲ ἀνθρώπων, προσλαβόντες τὰς ψευδοδόξους ταύτας τῶν πολλῶν τῆς ψυχῆς κινήσεις, φαντασίας αὐτοῖς ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ ἀγαλμάτων ἐπιβατεύοντες αὐτῶν τοῖς νοήμασιν εἰσρεῖν παρέχουσιν ("The demons, who are in control of matter, craving the fat and the blood of sacrificial victims and being deceivers of human beings, take hold of these movements of the soul of the majority of humans and get the opportunity of intruding in their reason, filling them with illusions as if the latter were coming from ghosts or statues").

40. The story is known to Justin too (*2 Apology* 5,3), on which subject see Annette Yoshiko Reed, "The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the

Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr," *JECS* 12 (2004): 141–171; on Irenaeus, the Pseudo-Clementine novel, Lactantius, and Commodianus, see the discussion in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1,* 92–93, as well as James C. VanderKam and William Adler, *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1996), 60–88.

41. Loren Struckenbruck rightly observes that the origin of the "unclean spirits" in the enochic tradition explains why these entities are so eager to enter human bodies: "demonic entry is understood as an attempt to recover a form of existence the giants had lost and to make humans suffer since, as species, they came through the Great Flood unscathed." Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* 182.

42. For instance, the mentions of unclean spirits leads Todd Klutz to treat exorcisms reductively as mere "rituals of purification" that (puzzlingly) "both assumed the validity of the demonology-impurity semiotic system and simultaneously flouted it" in a way that obviously was going to pit Jesus against "the traditional priestly health care system." See Todd E. Klutz, "The Grammar of Exorcism in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Some Cosmological, Semantic, and Pragmatic Reflections on How Exorcistic Prowess Contributed to the Worship of Jesus," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism,* ed. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, and G. S. Lewis (SupplJSJ 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 163–164.

43. Franz Annen, *Heil für die Heiden: zur Bedeutung und Geschichte der Tradition von besessenen Gerasener (Mk 5,1–20 parr.)* (Frankfurter Theologische Studien 20; Frankfurt am Main: Joseph Knecht, 1976), 182–186.

44. Carmen Bernabé Ubieta, "La curación del endemoniado de Gerasa desde la antropología cultural," in *Los Milagros de Jesús: perspectivas metodológicas plurales,* ed. R. Aguirre (Asociación Bíblica Española 39; Estella, Spain: Verbo Divino, 2002), 93–120.

45. Bernabé Ubieta, appeals to the authority of Jerome H. Neyrey and, indirectly, Mary Douglas on this point. See Ubieta "La curación," 116, citing Neyrey, "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel," *Semeia* 35 (1986): 103; and "Nudity" in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook,* ed. J. J. Pilch and B. J. Malina (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 119–125. But it seems that considering nudity as impurity would entail a complete overlap of shame and impurity that is unwarranted on the basis of the evidence at our disposal: indeed, it is telling that Neyrey—in the two contributions mentioned above—cannot present an ancient text describing nudity as defiling or needing purification procedures of any sort.

46. "The uncleanness of the spirit is probably not due to its association with tombs and thus with the impurity of corpses. Rather, it is unclean because of its origin. The association with tombs might indicate that the man is possessed by the spirits of those who died untimely or violent deaths." Collins, *Mark,* 267. Elder strengthens the same point, even though his proposal to see the dwelling among tombs as a specific intertextual reference to *1 Enoch* is perhaps less convincing, since it presupposes too precise a familiarity with the Book of Watchers on the part of Mark's readers. Elder, "Of Porcine and Polluted Spirits," 439–442.

47. Douglas W. Geyer, *Fear, Anomaly, and Uncertainty in the Gospel of Mark* (ATLA Monograph Series 47; Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002).

48. On the character, readership, and circulation of paradoxographical literature in this period, see Guido Schepens and Kris Delcroix, "Ancient Paradoxography: Origin, Evolution, Production, and Reception," in *La letteratura di consumo nel mondo greco-latino,* ed. O. Pecere and A. Stramaglia (Cassino: Università degli studi di Cassino, 1996), 373–460.

49. The text of Phlegon has been reedited with a thorough commentary by Antonio Stramaglia, *Res inauditae, incredulae: storie di fantasmi nel mondo greco-latino* (Le Rane 24; Bari, Italy: Levante, 1999), 230–236. It is worth mentioning that Phlegon's account lacks the opening third of Philinnion's story, because the only Greek manuscript that preserves *On Marvels* (a ninth-century codex in the library of Heidelberg) is missing the first few pages. Luckily, a summary of the narrative is given by Proclus in his comment on Plato's *Republic,* as it serves to prove the neo-platonic belief in the survival of the soul.

50. Phlegon of Tralles, *On Marvels* 1,11, in Phlegon Trallianus, *Opuscula de rebus mirabilibus et de longaevis,* ed. A. Stramaglia (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 5.

51. Phlegon casts the story within the fictional frame of a letter written by Hipparchos himself to his superior Arrhidaeos; on the epistolary fiction as a means to bolster the credibility of paradoxographical accounts, see Stramaglia, *Res inauditae,* 248–249.

52. Sarah Iles Johnston has illustrated these beliefs and the practices attached to them for the archaic and classical period in her landmark *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

53. In most folktales, widespread throughout the Mediterranean both in antiquity and today, the fate of these *revenants* is that of harming young women and their children. See Sarah Iles Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful: Remarks on the Greek Child-Killing Demon," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* ed. M. Meyer and P. Mirecki (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 361–387.

54. It is possible that they might fit all three categories, if one follows the version of the mytheme in which they die in the flood. Indeed, several Greek stories introduce the ghosts of drowned dead as particularly horrific and malevolent, because in their case the expectation of proper burial is completely out of the question. See Stramaglia, *Res inauditae,* 187–213.

55. Jerome H. Neyrey and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "*He Must Increase, I Must Decrease* (John 3:30): A Cultural and Social Interpretation," in *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models,* ed. J. H. Neyrey and E. C. Stewart (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 237–251.

56. This is apparent in Philinnion's answer to her parents quoted above, in particular in the use of φθονέω, which Stramaglia renders brilliantly in the Italian translation as *come siete stati ingiusti con me, nel vedere di cattivo occhio che io stessi per tre giorni con l'ospite nella mia casa paterna.* Stramaglia, *Res inauditae,* 235.

57. Again, in the above-quoted passage, Philinnion states that she has not returned "against a divine will" (ἄνευ θείας βουλήσεως).

58. Johnston illustrates this point well for the classic period and even for the most violent among the "restless dead," the βιαιοθάνατοι. Johnson, *Restless Dead,* 142–148.

59. On nudity as a sign of demonic influence, see the passage from Plutarch's *Life of Marcellus* quoted in Collins, *Mark,* 272.

60. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 566–567.

61. Actually the transition from "unclean spirit" to more explicitly "demonic" terminology in the very course of the narrative, instead of being evidence of the redactional construction of the pericope (as has often been suggested in traditional scholarship), can be interpreted as a sign of the Markan endeavor to combine traditional Jewish and Greek traits in the construction of the Gospel's demonology. This is ultimately consistent with the overall socio-cultural significance that the Gospel ascribes to the episode in Gerasa and to exorcisms more in general, as we will see below.

62. Philo of Alexandria, *Embassy to Gaius* 65.

63. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13,317. Another clear instance of the same use of δαίμονες is at 13,416.

64. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 1,607, with another noteworthy instance in 599, where the "demons" of the murdered become ἐρευνηταί and μηνυταί in the trial against their killers.

65. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 7,185, which serves as a very good definition of certain most dangerous and feared categories of βιαιοθάνατοι, such as gladiators. See also the description of Solomon's exorcistic power in Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8,45–48 and of Saul's possession by a spirit in Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 6,166, 168, and 211.

66. Indeed, it might be worth asking whether the connection goes back much earlier, if one compares the "original" Enochic story about the monstrous cannibalism of the giants with the ancestral sin of the Titans who devoured Dionysus in some orphic traditions. See Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 8; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 73–99. On the controversial issue of the existence of an orphic mytheme concerning the Titans' sin, see Alberto Bernabé, "La toile de Pénélope: a-t-il existé un mythe orphique sur Dionysos et les Titans?" *RHR* 219 (2002): 401–433; and Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets,* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 66–93.

67. An extraordinary diagnosis of this development is provided in Halvor Moxnes, "Ethnography and Historical Imagination in Reading Jesus as an Exorcist," *Neot* 44 (2010): 327–341.

68. On the case of Mark, see John J. Pilch, "Healing in Mark: A Social Science Analysis," *BTB* 15 (1985): 142–150.

69. As in Santiago Guijarro Oporto, "The Politics of Exorcism: Jesus' Reaction to Negative Labels in the Beelzebul Controversy," *BTB* 29 (1999): 118–129.

70. That is the case for the already mentioned analysis of Barnabé Ubieta or of Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist,* 166–185.

71. Bruce Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons: Exorcism and the Aesthetics of Healing in Sri Lanka,* 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1991).

72. See this particular and many others noted in Kapferer's detailed description of the ritual. Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 179–244.

73. Nicholas Elder has recently offered a very rich reading of Mk 5:1–20 in relationship to the Book of Watchers; on several points, Elder's analysis enhances our understanding of the pericope, but his reading is at times hampered and forced by his commitment to an exclusively intertextual and cognitive relation between the two texts. See, for instance, the problematic definition of his methodological outlook in Elder, "Of Porcine and Polluted Spirits," 433n9.

74. This is famously underscored for the occurrence of European "spirits" in African possession cults by Fritz W. Kramer, *Der rote Fez: über Besessenheit und Kunst in Afrika* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987), but see also the "history *from below*" articulated in the rich taxonomy of Swahili rituals, illustrated in Linda L. Giles, "Spirit Possession and the Symbolic Construction of Swahili Society," in *Spirit Possession, Modernity, and Power in Africa*, ed. Heike Behrend and Ute Luig (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 142–164.

75. "It is in performance that ritual gains its efficacy, and, in my view, reveals itself as essentially the 'hermeneutic' of culture—a method whereby culture analyzes itself. Exorcism transforms a patient from illness to health by engaging a patient and others in the logic and process of its own hermeneutic." Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 244.

76. Lambek, "From Disease to Discourse," 53–54.

77. For the disappearance (or survival under different guises) of these traditional cults under the combined pressure of modernization and Islamic revivals, see Janice Boddy, "Spirits and Selves Revisited: Zâr and Islam in Northern Sudan," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Religion,* ed. J. Boddy and M. Lambek (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 444–467; and Marja Tiilikainen, "Somali *Saar* in the Era of Social and Religious Change," in *Spirit Possession and Trance,* ed. Schmidt and Huskinson, 117–133.

78. The quotations are from Lewis via Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study," *JAAR* 49 (1981): 576. Hollenbach's seminal and very influential application of anthropological paradigms to the study of New Testament exorcisms relies heavily on Lewis's and Bourguignon's work.

79. Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the* Zâr *Cult in Northern Sudan* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

80. Janice Boddy, "Spirits and Selves in Northern Sudan: The Cultural Therapeutics of Possession and Trance," *American Ethnologist* 15 (1988): 20–21.

81. In both pericopes the "unclean spirits" cry out loud (a common material signifier of trance), but the address in Mk 5:7 is the one that most clearly evokes an exorcism formula, because of the presence of the verb *to adjure*: Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοι, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; Ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μὴ με βασανίσῃς ("What is it between me and you, Jesus son of the Most High God? I exorcize you in the name of God, do not torment me").

82. For a detailed taxonomy of these πάρεδροι in the PGM, see Leda Jean Ciraolo, "Supernatural Assistants in the Greek Magical Papyri," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* ed. Meyer and Mirecki, 281–295.

83. See the "code of conduct" for rituals of divination described in Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 156–158.

84. This is why the failed exorcisms of the "spirits" against Jesus (both in Mk 5 and in the above-mentioned Mk 1) entail the attempt to disclose Jesus's "true" identity as the "son of the most high God" (in 5:7) or "the holy one of God" (in 1:24) respectively. See Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist,* 158–161.

85. Such observation is usually credited to Gerd Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten: ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien* (Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher, 1974), 252, but goes at least as far back as Théodore Reinach, "Mon nom est Legion," *REJ* 47 (1903): 172–178.

86. This may well be the case for the passage from the *Testament of Solomon* discussed by Collins, *Mark,* 269n72.

87. For instance, a search for the term on the digital database of Greek documentary papyri (in February 2018) for the time period up to 200 CE does not yield any evidence of a nonmilitary use of λεγιών.

88. See the analogy with the US Army drawn by Joshua Garroway, "Invasion of a Mustard Seed: A Reading of Mark 5.1–20," *JSNT* 32 (2009): 57–75.

89. In particular, in Mathias Klinghardt, "Legionsschweine in Gerasa: Lokalkolorit und historischer Hintergrund von Mk 5,1–20," *ZNW* 98 (2007): 28–48; and Markus Lau, "Die *Legio X Fretensis* und der Besessene von Gerasa: Anmerkungen zur Zahlenangabe 'ungefähr Zweitausend' (Mk 5,13)," *Biblica* 88 (2007): 351–364.

90. Likewise, many contemporary readers would be equally hard-pressed to give the exact number of the components of a given unit within their national army, even though technical designations such as "platoon" or "battalion" are well-known and used in a generic sense. Garroway, "Invasion of a Mustard Seed," 61–62.

91. For a thorough discussion of the evidence, with images, see Klinghardt, "Legionsschweine in Gerasa," 36–41.

92. J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Contributions to the Study of the Gerasene Demoniac," *JSNT* 3 (1979): 2–17.

93. Klinghardt, "Legionsschweine in Gerasa," 40–41.

94. The best Klinghardt can do is to point out three tombstones that would indicate the presence of auxiliaries from the *Ala I Thracum Augusta* in Gerasa around the time of the Jewish war. Klinghardt, "Legionsschweine in Gerasa," 33–34.

95. Obviously, this does not mean that Romans were altogether absent from Gerasa. See Pierre-Louis Gautier, "Onomastique et présence romaine à Gérasa," in *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects,* ed. A. D. Rizakis (ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ 21; Athens: Boccard, 1996), 251–258.

96. This realization is slowly making inroads in New Testament studies too, but—as far as the exegesis of Mk 5 is concerned—Garroway is the only one to do so in a long footnote, even though this has no bearing on the further trajectory of his article. Garroway, "Invasion of a Mustard Seed," 63n13.

97. Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist,* 173–177.

98. The two classic ethnographies are Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); and Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

99. On Rouch, see Paul Henley, *The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the Craft of Ethnographic Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). *Les maîtres fous* is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8uHE20IARk, accessed March 14, 2019.

100. See, for instance, the use of the *hauka* case in Paul Stoller, *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power, and the Hauka in West Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

101. Paul Henley, "Spirit Possession, Power, and the Absent Presence of Islam: Re-Viewing *Les maîtres fous*," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 (2006): 731–761.

102. Henley, "Spirit Possession," 752.

103. For the dialogues between exorcists impersonating demons and mocking current events in Sinhalese political life or the hypocrisy of Buddhist monks, see Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 317–319.

104. Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1975), 90–114.

105. Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 309.

106. Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 296.

107. The botched first attempt of Jesus to exorcize the demon and the equally failed attempt of Legion to exorcize Jesus should be counted as part of the comic setup of the exorcism, in which the boundaries between divine and demonic realms are blurred only to be "stabilized" again in the episode of the pigs. Envisaging these features as comic elements could alleviate the problems of interpreters who do not know what to make of them and usually resort to the criterion of embarrassment to conclude that they must have been "original" for Mark to include them. For an exemplary discussion, see Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist,* 180–183.

108. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities," 581. Verse 20 would demonstrate that "the man was evidently a loudmouth"!

109. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 6,6,7–10; this passage and several other traditions are discussed in detail in Monica Visintin, *La vergine e l'eroe: Temesa e la leggenda di Euthymos di Locri* (Scrinia 4; Bari, Italy: Edipuglia, 1992).

110. The foundational study—posing the threatening nature of most Greek "heroes" as the defining feature of their heroization—remains Angelo Brelich, *Gli eroi greci: un problema storico-religioso* (Pubblicazioni della Scuola di studi storico-religiosi 4; Rome: Edizioni Dell'Ateneo, 1958).

111. Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1,130–134, and the other ancient sources listed in Johnston, *Restless Dead,* 59n68.

112. Plutarch has two versions of the story: the first one, in *On the Delays of Divine Vengeance* 560f. (where the ψυχαγωγοί are experts coming from Italy) and the second one, in *Moralia,* fragment 126 (preserved in a scholion to Euripides, in which the ψυχαγωγοί hail from Thessaly).

113. Kapferer, for instance, notes that Sinhalese exorcists are from lower castes, a social position that enables them to joke more freely on current events in the comic sections of the ritual. Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 317–319.

114. The following considerations will assume that Mk 5 can be confidently located in Gerasa. It is well known that such a geographical setting encounters significant text-

critical difficulties arguably generated by the fact that Gerasa is too distant from the lake to be a possible location for the episode of the pigs. Though he does not take any position on the issue, see Michael F. Bird, "Textual Criticism and the Historical Jesus," *JSHJ* 6 (2008): 133–156. However, one must account for Mark's limited reliability in matters of geography, while, in principle, one should try to explain the narrative as taking place in Gerasa (which, from a purely text-critical point of view must be strongly preferred as *lectio difficilior*), before moving on to other options. For the brilliant treatment of the topic, see Eric C. Stewart, *Gathered around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Matrix 6; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), ch. 1.

115. Daniel Cohen, "The Gerasene Demoniac: A Jewish Approach to Liberation before 70 CE," in *Judaism, Jewish Identities, and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey,* ed. J. G. Crossley (London: Equinox, 2010), 152–173.

116. As an example of Cohen's problematic approach, one can look at his statement that "the Decapolis had a significant indigenous population that was marginalized by a colonial Greco-Gentile population with the support of Roman Imperial power," which is immediately followed (after a brief mention of Aquinas as an example of "patristic scholarship"!) by these other words: "A large Jewish community existed in the Decapolis at least from the time when Alexander Yannai conquered the region from the Greek colonists. It is highly likely some Jews were descendants of pagans who were forced to convert by the Hasmonean king." See Cohen, "Gerasene Demoniac," 154.

117. The weight is published in Carl H. Kraeling, *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis* (New Haven: ASOR, 1938), n. 251; for a brief account of the historical information on the city, see Getzel M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 46; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 248–253.

118. For a detailed description of this historical development, see Rubina Raja, *Urban Development and Regional Identities in the Eastern Roman Provinces, 50 BC–AD 250: Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2012), 137–189; and in the contributions by Jacques Seigne and Roberto Parapetti in *Gadara— Gerasa und die Dekapolis,* ed. A. Hoffmann and S. Kerner (Mainz, Germany: Zabern, 2002).

119. On the Gerasa case, see Nathanael J. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013), 160–169.

120. Pierre-Louis Gatier, "La présence arabe à Gérasa et en Décapole," in *Présence arabe dans le Croissant Fertile avant l'Hégire,* ed. H. Lozachmeur (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1995), 109–118.

121. In a still-unpublished inscription; for a description, see Jacques Signe, "De la grotte au périptère: le sanctuaire de Zeus Olympien à Jérash," *Topoi* 7 (1997): 998.

122. Kraeling, *Gerasa,* n. 2.

123. Andrade, *Syrian Identity,* 164–165.

124. Pierre-Louis Gatier and Jacques Seigne, "Le *hammana* de Zeus a Gérasa," *Electrum* 11 (2006): 171–189.

125. Kraeling, *Gerasa,* n. 17, but see also n. 18 (a dedicatory inscription by a female slave, Tyche): *Pakeida* in all likelihood means "sent" (from the root *pqd*), which might be a title for the Nabatean solar god. If that holds true, one could count as related to the same cult also another dedicatory inscription to "Zeus angel" (Διὶ ἀγγέλωι) published in Pierre-Louis Gatier, "Inscriptions religieuses de Gérasa," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 26 (1982): 269–270. The title of ἀρχιβωμιστής is unparalleled, but it seems to indicate a public official responsible for the cult at a rock altar in the tradition of Nabatean religious practices.

126. Kraeling, *Gerasa,* nn. 19–22; on the relationship between Pakeida and the Arabic god, see Achim Lichtenberger, *Kulte und Kultur der Dekapolis: Untersuchungen zu numismatischen, archäologische und epigraphischen Zeugnisse* (ADPV 29; Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2003), 221–225.

127. One could count among these also the dedicatory inscription to the "highest god" (θεὸς ὕψιστος) recently found in the *chora* of Gerasa, if this inscription is referred again to the Semitic cult of a solar deity or even to Jewish devotion. See Glenn W. Bowersock, "The New Inscription from Rasun in Jordan," *Syria* 76 (1999): 223–225; and Stephen Mitchell, "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews, and Christians," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity,* ed. P. Athanassiadi and P. Frede (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 81–148.

128. It is worth mentioning here that Mark is perfectly capable of pointing out such nuances even in the performance of individual identities: for instance, when the Tyrian woman asking Jesus to perform an exorcism on her daughter in 7:26 is described as Ἑλλενίς, Συροφοινικίσσα τῷ γένει (with Ἑλλενίς almost always problematically translated as "Gentile").

129. On the architecture of Gerasa, see David L. Kennedy, "The Identity of Roman Gerasa: An Archaeological Approach," *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998): 39–69; for a critique of the thesis of a fundamental homogenization, see Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

130. Nathanael J. Andrade, "Ambiguity, Violence, and Community in the Cities of Judaea and Syria," *Historia* 59 (2010): 342–370.

131. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 2,458 and 480, bracketing the long episode of Scythopolis, which is absent from the retelling of the story in *Life* 25–27. On the reasons behind the differences between the two accounts, see the comments in Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Life of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 34–36, with a discussion of the opposite view put forward by Shaye Cohen. I do not see any grounds to judge as "surely contrived" Josephus's information about the actions of the Gerasenes, as does Sean Freyne in "The Revolt from a Regional Perspective," in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology,* ed. A. M. Berlin and J. A. Overman (London: Routledge, 2002), 47.

132. The point is well illustrated in a recent intervention of Warren Carter, "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus: Legion Enters the Pigs (Mark 5:1–20)," *JBL* 134 (2015): 139–155.

133. Stephen D. Moore, "'My Name Is Legion for We Are Many': Representing Empire in Mark," in *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield:

Phoenix, 2006), 24–44; and Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (BibInt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

134. Garroway, "Invasion of a Mustard Seed," 73.

135. It is intriguing to imagine that this might mirror the actual situation in Gerasa in 66 CE, if one can believe Josephus's information about the treatment of the Jewish population of the city.

136. On the temporary and negotiated nature of exorcism, see also Stuckenbruck, *Myth,* 184: "Being exorcized is not a static condition, but it is a mode of being within a fluid life process."

137. Shail Mayaram, "Spirit Possession: Reframing Discourses of the Self and Other," in *La possession en Asie du Sud: parole, corps, territoire* (Purusartha 21; Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999), 101–131. A similar resistance to hegemonic construction of identities can be read behind the *hauka* cults examined above: "This suggests to me that whatever the instrumental religious purposes of the *hauka* cult, it also acted in the context of the colonial city as a vehicle for the expression of the cultural identity and solidarity of the migrants. Far from acting as a refuge from the cacophony of the multi-ethnic 'Babylon' of the city [. . .] the *hauka* cult seems to have been one more energetic assertion of a particular identity that competed for the allegiance, or at least the attention, of the proletariat of colonial Accra." Henley, "Spirit Possession," 756.

CHAPTER 3. THE LAST ADAM BECAME A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

1. Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle*; and Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy.*

2. See, for instance, Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (NTSMS 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate. Part 1: the Jewish Sources," *HTR* 86 (1993): 177–217, and "Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance," *HTR* 86 (1993): 256–292; and James D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in Its Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986).

3. The two classic works that need to be mentioned are Adolf Deissmann, *Paulus: eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze,* 2nd ed. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1925); and Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik der Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1930), both of which are aptly critiqued in Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 20–66.

4. See, for instance, the difficulties encountered on this point by Bernard McGinn in the otherwise exemplary *The Foundations of Mysticism* (The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism 1; New York: Crossroads, 1991).

5. This is a no less embattled and potentially dangerous category than "mysticism," but it might provide useful resources for the purposes of this research. For a more thorough discussion of the pros and cons connected to this and other categories, see the introduction to the volume.

6. Before Shantz, similar approaches to Paul had already been attempted. See, for instance, C. Merrill Proudfoot, "Imitation or Realistic Participation? A Study of Paul's Concept of 'Suffering with Christ,'" *Interpretation* 17 (1963): 140–160. On the methodological point, see also Pieter F. Craffert, "What Does It Mean to Be Possessed by a Spirit or Demon? Some Phenomenological Insights from Neuro-Anthropological Research," *HTS* 71 (2015): 1–9.

7. See, for instance, the somewhat divergent stances taken up in Emma Cohen and Justin L. Barrett, "Conceptualizing Spirit Possession: Ethnographic and Experimental Evidence," *Ethos* 36 (2008): 246–267, and Espírito Santo, "Imagination, Sensation," 253, with the latter's observation that in some neuroscientific paradigms learning, for instance, "starts not with a plan for constructing cognitive modules that are *as yet unrealized,* but with preconstituted modules whose 'needs' for information are *as yet unspecified,*" so that the method ends up reinscribing the primacy of "innate" over "environmental" factors and the modern "buffered" self.

8. Christopher Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16: Spirit Possession and Authority in a Non-Pauline Interpolation," *JBL* 124 (2005): 313–340; and Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 177–181. The language of "conversion" is by now recognized as inappropriate, but I still use it here for brevity's sake: on the issue, see Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

9. Even James D. G. Dunn, who is very sensitive to "charismatic" elements, recognizes the centrality of these themes, even though they cannot but militate against his own organization of the Pauline materials in the guise of a systematic theology. "It is necessary, in other words, to bring this other way of looking at Paul's understanding of God's saving work more to the fore. Not least of importance is to reintegrate into Paul's larger theology the dimension of Christ mysticism (or whatever we call it) and the experience of the Spirit and to find the best way to correlate his relatively brief teaching on baptism and the body of Christ with these major emphases. [. . .] For, in fact, study of participation in Christ leads more directly into the rest of Paul's theology than justification." Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 395.

10. A similar attention for the culturally productive role played by the "spirit world" also emerges in Guy Williams, *The Spirit World in the Letters of Paul the Apostle: A Critical Examination of the Role of Spiritual Beings in the Authentic Pauline Epistles* (FRLANT 231; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). However, Williams (despite entertaining the notion that Paul might have been possessed by the "spirit" of Christ, at 210–216) does not devote any attention to the study of spirit possession as a cross-cultural phenomenon.

11. For a good albeit rather dry and statistical overview of the Pauline use of the phrase and of the parallel ἐν κυρίῳ ("in the lord"), see Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 396–401.

12. On potential divergences in the use of the phrase in *Ephesians,* see John A. Allan, "The 'In Christ' Formula in Ephesians," *NTS* 5 (1958): 54–62.

13. Moreover, as Charles F. D. Moule notes, the occurrences of the phrase in the Pastorals indicate that what is "in Christ" are almost always abstract objects (*pistis, agape, charis,* or *soteria*), and only rarely human beings. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 55.

14. It is not very appropriate to distinguish from a chronological standpoint the New Testament from the heterogeneous collection usually designated as "Apostolic Fathers," but it is worth noting that ἐν Χριστῷ occurs only twice in the *First Letter of Clement* (32:4; 38:1) and twice again in the authentic letters of Ignatius (*Ephesians* 1:1 and *Trallians* 9:2).

15. The most representative contribution in the early wave of scholarship on Paul's "mysticism" is certainly Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg: Elwert, 1892), whose foundational proposal of the identity between "Christ" and "spirit" will be taken up here, even though Deissmann could not envisage the implications as far as the role of spirit possession is concerned.

16. Such ideas are often expressed by Paul also by using the particle διά accompanied by genitive, but—as noted pointedly by Dunn—there are occasions on which the instrumental role of events and actions of the historical Jesus falls short of explaining what the apostle may mean, as in the case of 2 Cor 3:4: "We have such confidence towards God through Christ" (πεποίθησιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν). Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 406.

17. On this point, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

18. "For we are not like the crowd, who peddles the word of God, but we speak in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν) as from sincere intent, as from God and in the presence of God."

19. "Therefore I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the lord, who will remind you of my paths in Christ (ὃς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδούς μου τάς ἐν Χριστῷ), as I teach everywhere in every assembly."

20. Πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

21. Ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

22. The phrase "with Christ" occurs less often and in less significant contexts than "in Christ." Exceptions might be considered Rom 6:8 ("If we died with Christ, we believe that we will live with him [Εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ]") or possibly Col 2:13 ("And you, who are dead for your failings and for the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you live with him [συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ], having amnestied to you all the failings").

23. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 402.

24. Ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν.

25. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, and this "body" is Christ as Paul has just stated in 1 Cor 12:12.

26. Ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστόν.

27. Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 230–237.

28. It is worth noting that this "holy spirit" has no article, even though Mark is perfectly capable of using the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, as he does in the condemnation of those who slander "the" Holy Spirit in Mk 3:29.

29. Joel Marcus appropriately rejects the instrumental meaning, but then goes on to say that one should imagine "an immersion in the Spirit conceived as a supernatural, liquidlike substance" with no hint at the similarity with the idea of being "in an unclean spirit." Marcus is concerned that the baptism of the "stronger one" should still be identified with sacramental baptism performed with water, but the thrust of the entire verse goes against such conclusion and indeed even Paul does not necessarily link the experience of the spirit with baptism, as we will see momentarily. Marcus, *Mark,* 1:152.

30. For the assumed prophetic status of David in this passage and in Second Temple Judaism more in general, see Collins, *Mark,* 579.

31. The *Gospel of Mark* provides a convenient comparandum (as already noted by Williams, but this does not require the hypothesis of a literary or theological connection between Paul and the second Gospel. It is actually more appropriate to imagine that such terminology was used more generally by Christ groups to express the phenomenon of possession. Williams, *Spirit World,* 211. On the controversial (and problematic) issue of the relationship between Paul and Mark, see Joel Marcus, "Mark—Interpreter of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000): 473–487, and the critical rejoinder in Lawrence M. Wills, "The Jewishness of the Gospel of Mark," in *Bridging between Sister Religions: Studies of Jewish and Christian Scriptures Offered in Honor of Prof. John T. Townsend,* ed. I. Kalimi (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 67–86.

32. Ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός, which tellingly follows structurally and logically a sentence with a verb with σύν as a prefix (συσταυρόω). It is important to emphasize that, even though verse 20 goes on to speak of Paul as living "in the faith/faithfulness of the son of God," one ought not simply dismiss the indwelling of Christ as a metaphor of faith. On the contrary, faith itself is grounded in the transformative experience of the indwelling of Christ. Thus, Hans Dieter Betz can say that "the underlying assumption is that the resurrected Christ is identical with the 'spirit'" and can follow up with the statement that "the 'divine life' which the Christian receives through the indwelling of Christ expresses itself as 'faith.'" Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 124–125.

33. Ἢ οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν; The fact that the first half of the verse contains another parallel reference to "being in the faith/faithfulness" should be interpreted in the way sketched in the preceding footnote.

34. The language can recall also "patronage," which was a hugely influential institution in antiquity and might thus have had a bearing also on Paul's frequent use of *pistis/pisteuo,* for which see now Teresa J. Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

35. And Paul surely did not shy away from adopting this idiom for his own purposes, as noted in J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

36. Ἕκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ; the mention of the (often military) "order" (τάγμα) shows quite well how inextricably intertwined the idiom of possession is with the political.

37. See Dieter Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 5; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 489, with an exegetical connection extended to Rom 8:9.

38. Ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

39. Ἀλλὰ ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

40. Mount mentions these verses at the very beginning of his entire treatment of the subject of possession in the Pauline groups. Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 316–317.

41. From a merely statistical point of view, Rom 8 contains 21 occurrences of πνεῦμα out of 32 in the entire letter.

42. Ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ("The law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made you free").

43. Ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν· αββα ὁ πατήρ. 16 Αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ. 17 Εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν ("But you received a spirit of adoption in which we cry out: Abba, father! 16 The same spirit testifies together with our spirit that we are children of God. 17 And if we are children, then we are also heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we suffer together with him so that we might be glorified with him").

44. Paul comes back again on the same note later in the chapter (verse 23) when he speaks of the "inward groaning" (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν) of those who have "the first fruits of the spirit" (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες) and (verse 26) when he mentions the spirit's intercession "with unutterable groans" (στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις).

45. Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 127–131.

46. The translation of the two phrases διὰ ἁμαρτίαν and διὰ δικαιοσύνην (whether one prefers to take the meaning of the phrase as causal, "because of," or as indicating relationship, "on account of") constitutes a highly debated problem, which has a long history reaching back to the earliest commentators of *Romans.* See the illustration in Carlo Lorenzo Rossetti, "'Se Cristo è in voi . . .': ricerca storico-esegetica su Rm 8,10," *ASE* 20 (2003): 321–335. With Rossetti, it seems reasonable to privilege the christological-pneumatological reading of the Origenian tradition over against the anthropological-hamartiological interpretation that goes back to Augustine. However, this issue has only a very limited bearing on the present discussion, so that an appropriate rendering might be the noncommittal "for."

47. The witnesses to the text of *Romans* are somewhat divided in putting an accusative or a genitive after the particle διά here; the first option (causal, as in the translation given above) emphasizes the role of the spirit in offering a guarantee of the future resurrection, while the second option ("through," instrumental) seems to attribute some sort of agency to the spirit. The text critical issue is further complicated by the fact that a

majority of the most reliable witnesses originated at a time (the fourth and fifth centuries) when the divinity of the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity was a matter of heated debate. Gordon D. Fee has reiterated a good argument in favor of the accusative, but has also rightly pointed out that any text critical decision has a rather limited theological impact, since the idea that the spirit effects the resurrection of humans (or even less likely of Christ) has hardly any support in other Pauline texts. Fee, "The Spirit and Resurrection in Paul: Text and Meaning in Romans 8:11," in *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-Critical and Exegetical Studies,* ed. J. W. Childers and D. C. Parker (Texts and Studies 3/4; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006), 142–153. That said, to affirm that the role of the spirit with respect to the eschatological resurrection is *merely* that of providing a "certified guarantee" in a forensic sense severely undersells the affective way in which Paul's hope is predicated on the embodied experience of the spirit.

48. This is observed by Ashton too, even though he does not do much with it at the very end of his seminal book. Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 234.

49. Tellingly, Jan Lambrecht has trouble explaining why it may appear strange that "obviously Christ and the Spirit are very much linked in empowering the believers" in these verses. Lambrecht, "Style and Content: A Note on Romans 8,10," *ETL* 86 (2010): 172.

50. The point is argued very well in Peter Orr, *Christ Absent and Present: A Study in Pauline Christology* (WUNT 2/354; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 202–208, even though the author's failure to look for cross-cultural examples of spirit possession leads him to leave unexplained what the "personality" of the "spirit" might be in concrete terms.

51. It is telling to see how Romano Penna hesitates in a classic study between affirming the sense of "belonging" of the genitive and immediately qualifying it as "inappropriate" ("Al genitivo perciò va conservato il suo valore di appartenenza, anche se in senso improprio e partecipato," p. 260). Penna, *Lo Spirito di Cristo: Cristologia e pneumatologia secondo un'originale formulazione paolina* (SupplRivBib 7; Brescia, Italy: Paideia, 1976), 260.

52. Frey recognizes this connection and its role in Paul's discernment of the "spirits," but then he moves in a completely different direction. Frey, "How Did the Spirit Become a Person?" 361.

53. "So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh. For, if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die; but, if in spirit you kill the operations of the body, you will live."

54. 1 Cor 10:20–21: "But [I say] that what [they] sacrifice they sacrifice it to demons (δαιμονίοις) and not to God. I do not want you to become possessed by demons. You cannot drink from the cup of the lord and from the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the lord and of the table of demons."

55. Williams, *Spirit World,* 177–183.

56. The *tromba* are the "spirits" of dead Sakalava kings from northwestern Madagascar. See Michael Lambek, *The Weight of the Past: Living with History in Mahajanga, Madagascar* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

57. Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu,"* 80–81: "Aber von einen

'historischen' Christus, im Sinne dieses heute so beliebten Wortes, ist bei Paulus nicht zu finden. Was wir jetzt 'geschichtliche Erscheinung Jesu Christi' nennen, kennt er natürlich zwar auch, aber Christus ist für ihn zunächst ein in der Gegenwart lebendes Wesen."

58. James D. G. Dunn, "1 Corinthians 15:45—Last Adam, Life-Giving Spirit," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament,* ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 127–141, now republished in Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit,* Vol. 1, *Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 166: "Although Paul thinks almost exclusively in terms of the present Jesus experienced now as Spirit, he does not thereby ignore or deny the relevance of the historical man Jesus. For it is precisely the Jesus-, that is, the historical Jesus-content and Jesus-character of the present experience of Spirit which is the distinctive and most important feature of the experience."

59. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle,* 409–410: "Christ was still a personal reality within the totality of reality, still in direct continuity with Jesus of Nazareth, still the focus of God's saving grace for both present and future. But 'personal' in a sense which is no longer the same as the human 'person,' and yet is more sharply defined than talk of God as 'personal.'"

60. Without a doubt, for instance, John Ashton recognizes the importance of the "spirit" in establishing and supporting Paul and his groups, but his approach to the questions addressed here is hindered by his understanding of the Pauline *pneuma* as an impersonal force (analogous to "electricity") and his hypothesis that it was passed on among the members of the Christ groups not through possession, but through preaching. Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 200–202. Similarly problematic is the understanding of the *pneuma* as an impersonal "cosmic *stuff*" in Stanley K. Stowers, "What Is 'Pauline Participation in Christ'?" in *Redefining First Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders,* ed. F. Udoh et al. (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 352–371.

61. Jörg Frey allows for the possibility of writing a history of the development of the personality of the Pauline "divine spirit," but he does not consider possession at all and assumes without further explanation the differentiation between Christ and πνεῦμα. On the basis of such premises, his conclusion is expectedly that Paul's pneumatology is little more than the anticipation of the later Trinitarian dogma. Frey, "How Did the Spirit Become a Person?" 358–361.

62. Orr's ultimately theological concern seems to be the risk that, without adequate consideration of Christ's absence, one might lose the "humanity" of the risen and enthroned Jesus too. Orr, *Christ Absent and Present,* 219–223. This might be a worthy consideration in a contemporary perspective and after the Trinitarian debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, but, for Paul, clearly Christ was not a "human being" any more after his resurrection.

63. In all likelihood, the best instance marshaled by Orr is Phil 1:23: Τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῷ γὰρ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον ("As I have the desire to be free and to be with Christ, for that is much better").

64. Χριστὸς ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθείς, ὃς καὶ ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ("Christ who died, but who was raised, who is at the right hand of God and who intercedes in our behalf").

65. Michael Lambek, "Traveling Spirits: Unconcealment and Undisplacement," in *Traveling Spirits: Migrants, Markets, and Mobilities,* ed. G. Hüwelmeier and K. Krause (London: Routledge, 2010), 17–35.

66. One could reasonably argue that this point concerning Jesus's fate is a common ground, shared between Paul and his Corinthian "opponents."

67. The discussion concerning the origin of the "two men" theory expounded by Paul here and its implications for the overall interpretation of 1 Cor 15 are a matter of ongoing discussion: see Menahem Kister, "'First Adam' and 'Second Adam' in 1 Cor 15:45–49 in the Light of Midrashic Exegesis and Hebrew Usage," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature,* ed. R. Bieringer (SupplJSJ 136; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 351–365; Stefan Nordgaard, "Paul's Appropriation of Philo's Theory of 'Two Men' in 1 Corinthians 15.45–49," *NTS* 57 (2011): 348–365; and Stephen Hultgren, "The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15.45–49," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 343–370.

68. "The community's experience of the exalted Jesus as πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν is what enables Paul to affirm the representative significance of Jesus' resurrection and resurrection body. [. . .] Paul's own experience of the life of the Spirit bearing the imprint of Jesus' character and conforming him to that image is the ground on which Paul asserts the representative significance of Jesus' risen humanity." Dunn, "1 Corinthians 15:45-Last Adam," 162.

69. 1 Cor 15:49: Καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοικοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου.

70. In this perspective, the seminal contribution has been Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

71. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

72. This is the main shortcoming in the criticisms of Engberg-Pedersen's work that are similar to that of John R. Levison, "Paul in the *Stoa Poecile:* a Response to Troels Engberg-Pedersen: *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: the Material Spirit* (Oxford, 2010)," *JSNT* 33 (2011): 415–432.

73. Orr, *Christ Absent and Present,* 76. The other criticisms marshaled against Engberg-Pedersen are less compelling, in particular the one that relies on the assumed "uniqueness" of Paul's experiences, seen also in John M. G. Barclay, "Stoic Physics and the Christ-Event: A Review of Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010)," *JSNT* 33 (2011): 406–414.

74. See the comments about the lack of precise overlap between Paul's views and Stoic systems in Gretchen Reydam-Schils's review of the book in *The Journal of Religion,* vol. 93 (2013): 378–379.

75. For a neuroscientific description of the phenomenon and its connection to the ἄρρητα ῥήματα in 2 Cor 12:4, see Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 101–108.

76. Traditional interpretations of the passage (with a potential redactional critical exercise in mind) have read it as a "concession" made by Paul in order to ingratiate the more "Jewish" community of Rome; however, in recent years it has become clearer that the christology of verses 3–4 is much more closely intertwined with the arguments developed by Paul throughout the letter. See Michael Theobald, "'Geboren aus dem Samen Davids . . .' (Röm 1,3): Wandlungen im paulinischen Christus-Bild?" *ZNW* 102 (2011): 235–260.

77. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 235, with the discussion of the interpretation proposed by John Chrysostom (and Fitzmyer's proposal of "divine appointment").

78. Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 104, following Leslie C. Allen, "The Old Testament Background of (προ)ὁρίζειν in the New Testament," *NTS* 17 (1970): 104–108, who suggests a dependence of the Pauline use from Ps 2:7. See also Marie-Emile Boismard, "Constitué fils de Dieu (Rom I.4)," *RB* 60 (1953): 5–17.

79. See the analysis in Ernest R. Martinez, "Ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν: mediante la risurrezione dei morti in Rm 1,4," in *Atti del V Simposio di Tarso su S. Paolo apostolo,* ed. L. Padovese (Turchia: la Chiesa e la sua storia 12; Rome: Pontificio Ateneo Antoniano, 1998), 95–103, who follows the proposals of Dunn, Jewett, and others.

80. This is often argued in traditional exegesis, which then goes on to read verse 3 as a Pauline criticism of Jewish "nationalistic" and "exclusivistic" messianic expectations (for instance, in Dunn). That the binary κατὰ σάρκα/κατὰ πνεῦμα does not always constitute an absolute polarity in Paul is argued persuasively in Michael Theobald, "'Dem Juden zuerst und auch dem Heiden': die paulinische Auslegung der Glaubensformel Röm 1,3f.," in *Kontinuität und Einheit: Für Franz Mussner,* ed. P.-G. Müller and W. Stenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 376–392, republished in Theobald, *Studien zum Römerbrief* (WUNT 136; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001), 102–118. See also Larry W. Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship in Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday,* ed. S. K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 217–233.

81. On this parallelism, see Nathan C. Johnson, "Romans 1:3–4: Beyond Antithetical Parallelism," *JBL* 136 (2017): 467–490.

82. Andries B. du Toit, "Romans 1,3–4 and the Gospel Tradition: A Reassessment of the Phrase κατὰ Πνεῦμα Ἁγιωσύνης," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck,* ed. F. Van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden (BETL 100; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1992), 1, 249–256.

83. While beyond the scope of the present examination (and perhaps impossible from a methodological point of view), it would be quite interesting to reconstruct the pre-Pauline creed as ἐν πνεύματι ἁγιωσύνης, as suggested by Theobald in "Dem Juden zuerst," 109. This would destroy the parallelism, but it would make clear that Jesus's appointment as "son of God" came out of an experience of spirit possession, as

illustrated by the hypothetical use of the phrase ἐν πνεύματι, which we have already encountered repeatedly before.

84. James D. G. Dunn, "Jesus—Flesh and Spirit: An Exposition of Romans 1:3–4," *JTS* 24 (1973): 40–68, now in James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: Collected Essays of James D. G. Dunn* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 1:126–153.

85. Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου ("The God of hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in the hope in the power of a holy spirit"). Τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον is the designation used regularly by Paul, so that it is reasonable to think that the unusual πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης might indeed be a pre-Pauline (possibly Semitic) formulation; see Jewett, *Romans,* 107.

86. Du Toit, "Reassessment," 255.

87. Several other passages in which Christ appears to be identified as a πνεῦμα are discussed in Pauline scholarship, but they cannot be treated here because of space constraints. However, it may be worth mentioning at least 2 Cor 3:17: ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία ("The Lord is the spirit; where is the spirit of the Lord, there is freedom"). Whether this verse belongs to the number of those reviewed above is a matter of great dispute; see, the contrasting opinions of James D. G. Dunn, who is against the equivalence between Christ and spirit, and Marie-Emile Boismard, who is in favor. Dunn, "2 Corinthians 3:17—'The Lord Is the Spirit,'" *JTS* 21 (1970): 309–320, now in Dunn, *Christ and the Spirit,* 1:115–125; Boismard, *Faut-il encore parler de "résurrection"? Les données scripturaires* (Paris: Cerf, 1995).

88. The point is appropriately reiterated by Matthew W. Bates, even if some of his other conclusions are less convincing. Bates, "A Christology of Incarnation and Enthronement: Romans 1:3–4 as Unified, Nonadoptionist, and Nonconciliatory," *CBQ* 77 (2015): 107–127.

89. For a recent discussion of the issue of authorship of the *Shepherd,* see Jörg Rüpke, "Der Hirte des Hermas: Plausibilisierungs- und Legitimierungsstrategien im Übergang von Antike und Christentum," *ZAC* 8 (2005): 276–298; on the possibility that the Muratorian fragment is a fourth-century forgery, see Clare K. Rothschild, "The Muratorian Fragment as Roman Fake," *NT* 60 (2018): 55–82.

90. P. Iand 4, a little papyrus fragment carrying a few lines from Hermas's *Mandata,* has been recently redated—on paleographical grounds—to the early second century, a date that would prove the circulation of some materials before the "final" redaction; see Antonio Carlini, "Testimone e testo: il problema della datazione di PIand I 4 e il Pastore di Erma," *SCO* 42 (1992): 17–30. On the textual tradition of the *Shepherd* and its circulation in several different forms, see Carlini, "P. Michigan 130 (inv. 44-H) e il problema dell'unicità di redazione del Pastore di Erma," *La parola del passato* 208 (1983): 29–37.

91. On the artificial character of the "Apostolic Fathers," see David Lincicum, "The Paratextual Invention of the Term 'Apostolic Fathers,'" *JTS* 66 (2015): 139–148.

92. For a recent revision of the traditional dating of the *Shepherd* that would on tradition critical grounds move the date toward the first century, see Andrew Gregory, "Disturbing Trajectories: *1 Clement,* the *Shepherd of Hermas,* and the Development of Early

Roman Christianity," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church,* ed. P. Oakes (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 2002), 142–166.

93. This is something that occurs also in my early examination of the subjects discussed here. See Giovanni B. Bazzana, "Il corpo della carne di Gesù Cristo (POxy I 5): conflitti ecclesiologici nel cristianesimo del II secolo," *Adamantius* 10 (2004): 100–122.

94. On the setting, see Erik Peterson, "Kritische Analyse der fünften Vision des Hermas," in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis: Studien und Untersuchungen* (Rome: Herder, 1959), 272–274; on the technical term στατιών ("posting" in the military sense), see Christine Mohrmann, "Statio," *VChr* 7 (1953): 221–245.

95. The Greek text of the fifth *Similitude*—unless otherwise noted—is taken from *The Apostolic Fathers,* trans. B. D. Ehrman (LCL 25; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2:318–336.

96. Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (SupplVChr 95; Leiden: Brill, 2009), and more specifically Bucur, "The Son of God and the Angelomorphic Holy Spirit: A Rereading of the Shepherd's Christology," *ZNW* 98 (2007): 121–143.

97. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* 137.

98. This is obviously the core of Bucur's inquiry, and it continues the trend established in a few seminal contributions of John R. Levison. See Levison, "The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism," *SBLSP* 34 (1995): 464–493, and Levison, "The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel According to Philo," *HTR* 88 (1995): 189–207.

99. Bucur works out the implications of an understanding of what "angel" meant that had been already identified by Jean Daniélou: "The word angel connotes a supernatural being manifesting himself. The nature of this supernatural being is not determined by the expression, but by the context. 'Angel' is the old fashioned equivalent of 'person.'" Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 118; see also Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* xxv–xxvii.

100. This is evident for instance in a volume by Carolyn Osiek, when she has recourse to the artificial category of "pneumatic adoptionist christology." See Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 179. For similar problems of categorization, see Manlio Simonetti, "Note di cristologia pneumatica," *Augustinianum* 12 (1972): 201–232.

101. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* 128–136, dependent on Philippe Henne, "La véritable christologie de la Cinquième Similitude du Pasteur d'Hermas," *RSPT* 74 (1990): 182–204.

102. This is the case, for instance, for the use of the imperative ἄκουε ("listen") that Hermas also employs elsewhere. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* 129n47.

103. Osiek, *Shepherd,* 180.

104. The issue is analyzed quite well in Martin Leutzsch, *Die Wahrnehmung sozialer Wirklichkeit im "Hirten des Hermas"* (FRLANT 150; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 151–153. The other rather exceptional instance is obviously Phil 2:7, for which it is interesting to look at the coyness of the Patristic reception.

105. Osiek, *Shepherd,* 178.

106. A very important element with respect to Hermas's use of slavery language to speak of spirit possession is the way in which 5,6,6 describes how God chooses the "flesh" who has successfully "served as a slave" for the "holy spirit" to be its κοινωνός ("companion"). The terminology cannot fail to recall how Paul asks Philemon to take back his slave Onesimus as a κοινωνός, which Paul already is, in Philm 17.

107. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* 127.

108. Such a conclusion is reflected also in Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "The Christology of Hermas and the Interpretation of the Fifth Similitude," *Augustinianum* 37 (1997): 273–284, even though his analysis is at times stifled by his adherence to the categories of the traditional *Dogmengeschichte.*

109. On the Jewish roots of Hermas's anthropology with respect to the "flesh," see Luigi Cirillo, "La christologie pneumatique de la cinquième parabole du 'Pasteur' d'Hermas (Par. V,6,5)," *RHR* 184 (1973): 25–48.

110. The absence of resurrection in the *Shepherd* is well analyzed in Mark R. C. Grundeken, "Resurrection of the Dead in the *Shepherd of Hermas:* A Matter of Dispute," in *Resurrection of the Dead: Biblical Traditions in Dialogue,* ed. G. Van Oyen and T. Shepherd (BETL 249; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2012), 403–415. Grundeken concludes that Hermas envisages "a continued existence of the true Christian believer as part of the everlasting body of the Christian Church" (415).

111. Osiek, *Shepherd,* 180; and Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology,* 133, rightly oppose Norbert Brox, who proposes to translate τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον as "holy spirit" and to capitalize all the preceding occurrences. See Brox, *Der Hirt des Hermas* (KAV 7; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 323–324.

CHAPTER 4. IF ONE DOES NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, ONE DOES NOT BELONG TO HIM

1. At least in the case of 1 Cor 12:13 the incorporation seems to have been mediated through the ritual of baptism: καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν ("For in one single spirit we all were baptized into one single body").

2. Such a perspective is completely absent from the otherwise insightful work of Matthias Walter, *Gemeinde als Leib Christi: Untersuchungen zum Corpus Paulinum und zu den "Apostolischen Vätern"* (NTOA 49; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001). Walter starts from the assumption that the Pauline idiom of incorporation has to be understood primarily as a linguistic phenomenon (68–69). The tendency to treat the "body of Christ" as purely metaphorical is rightly opposed by Thomas Söding, "'Ihr aber seid der Leib Christi' (1 Kor 12,27): exegetische Beobachtungen an einem zentralen Motiv paulinischer Ekklesiologie," in *Das Wort vom Kreuz: Studien zur paulinischen Theologie* (WUNT 93; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997), 272–299; and Giovanni B. Bazzana, *Autorità e successione: figure profetiche nei testi del giudeo-cristianesimo antico* (Studi di Storia del Cristianesimo e delle Chiese cristiane 7; Milan: Biblioteca Francescana, 2003), 35–38.

3. The best-known parallel to the Pauline use is surely the speech of Menenius Agrippa reported by Livy, but there are several other ancient passages that carry different political

nuances. Most of them are collected and analyzed in Walter, *Gemeinde,* 70–98, and in Andreas Lindemann, "Die Kirche als Leib: Beobachtungen zur 'demokratischen' Ekklesiologie bei Paulus," *ZTK* 92 (1995): 140–165, even though the latter author's conclusions with respect to Paul's use are not convincing. See also the treatment in Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 38–68.

4. On the rhetorical orientation of *1 Corinthians* and Paul's reemployment of political tropes and images, the standard work is Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991).

5. See, in particular, Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology,* ch. 6.

6. William S. Sax, "Performing God's Body," *Paragrana* 18 (2009): 165–187.

7. "This is the most persuasive and powerful appearance of the god, more compelling than any iconographic description and more immediate than any story. Kachiya possesses a person sitting next to you, and he is visibly transformed: the bared teeth, the bent waist, the dancing on his knees on the floor, the cramped and claw-like hands. This is a physical embodiment of Bhairav, and devotees see it often enough to persuade them that he is quite real. Indeed, when I asked my friends if they 'really believed' in Kachiya, their most common response was, 'Of course, I do. How could I not believe in him? He comes and dances, and you can see him right there in front of you!'" Sax, "Performing God's Body," 180.

8. Janice Boddy, "Subversive Kinship: The Role of Spirit Possession in Negotiating Social Place in Rural Northern Sudan," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 16 (1993): 29–38.

9. The connection between fictive kinship and possession should not be overemphasized, since the first is well attested for ancient voluntary associations too and the organizational paradigms of these associations certainly at the very least influenced the ways in which Paul described his communities; on the issue, see Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians* (WUNT 2/161; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003).

10. For an incisive criticism of Ioan Lewis's functionalist paradigm, see Boddy, "Subversive Kinship," 29–30.

11. Richard Freeman, "Dynamics of the Person in the Worship and Sorcery of Malabar," in *La possession en Asie du Sud: Parole, corps, territoire*, ed. Jackie Assayag and Gilles Tarabout (Puruṣārtha 21. Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999), 149–181.

12. "In terms of bodily activities, the more overtly ecstatic behaviors of trembling, jumping, running, shaking paraphernalia, and hooting that might be exhibited by those embodying lower beings are often demonstrably calmed through receiving the blessing, authoritative gestures, or benedictions of higher embodiments." Freeman, "Dynamics of the Person," 155. Observations such as these will be examined in the following chapter when we look at Paul's recommendations in 1 Cor 12–14.

13. Most studies that address the social situation in Corinth end up being apologies of the subversive *pathos* of Paul over against the conservatism of his Corinthian "opponents," but it is worth mentioning the case of Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women*

Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990), who sees Paul as intent on controlling the liberating pneumatic experiences of some Corinthian women. See also Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 39n61.

14. See the essays collected in the previously mentioned book edited by G. Hüwelmeier and K. Krause, *Traveling Spirits: Migrants, Markets, and Mobilities.*

15. As far as possession is concerned the most significant case is certainly that of the African diasporas in the Caribbean archipelago and in South America, where these religious influences have generated a rich array of phenomena, such as Voudun, Santeria, Candomblé. The lively historiographical debate concerning the genesis of these contemporary phenomena seems to point toward the refinement of earlier paradigms centered around original Africanness and syncretism, as in Stefania Capone, *La quête de l'Afrique dans le Candomblé: pouvoir et tradition au Brésil* (Paris: Karthala, 1999); and Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

16. The translocal character of the Christ groups has been inappropriately emphasized in order to distinguish their organizational features from those common to ancient voluntary associations. I agree with Richard S. Ascough that one should reverse course on this account, but even he concedes that the Christ groups had some amount of translocal connectivity. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships Among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity," *JECS* 5 (1997): 223–241.

17. Cavan W. Concannon, *"When You Were Gentiles": Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence* (Synkrisis; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), ch. 3.

18. Michael Lambek, *The Weight of the Past: Living with History in Mahajanga, Madagascar* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 191–212.

19. On the translocal character of possession cults, see the case of Santería in Aisha M. Beliso-DeJesús, *Electric Santería: Racial and Sexual Arrangements of Transnational Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

20. On the combination of religious and financial motifs behind the collection, see Julien M. Ogereau, *Paul's Koinonia with the Philippians: A Socio-Historical Investigation of a Pauline Economic Partnership* (WUNT 2/377; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014); David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (WUNT 2/248; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008); and Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy, and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (WUNT 2/124; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000).

21. On the interpretation of the larger passage, see Larry L. Welborn, "'That There Might Be Equality': The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal," *NTS* 59 (2013): 73–90; and Steven J. Friesen, "Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage," in *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on the Apostle,* ed. M. D. Given (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 27–54.

22. Michael Lambek, "Spirit Possession/Spirit Succession: Aspects of Social Continuity among Malagasy Speakers in Mayotte," *American Ethnologist* 15 (1988): 710–731.

23. "Yet succession to mediumship is not a mere vehicle toward individual maturity, but a means of articulating the reproduction of the family as a social unity. [...] The human agents may change but the spirits remain as their contract with the family is renewed at each generation. In this way the spirit takes on some of the characteristics of an ancestral figure (though it is not one) since it is linked to the identities of members of ascending generations in whose bodies it manifested itself and with whose interests it might have been identified." Lambek, "Spirit Possession/Spirit Succession," 718–719.

24. Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 145–185.

25. For instance in verse 10: Ἡμῖν γὰρ ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ ("To us God has revealed through the spirit, for the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God"), and the overall comments in Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology,* pp. 46–50.

26. Engberg-Pedersen's failure to account for possession here explains why he does not want to entertain the possibility of another πνεῦμα over against the "divine" one even in a verse such as 1 Cor 2:12: Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν ("But we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God, in order that we might know the gifts that have been bestowed on us by God"). Engberg-Pedersen denies that Paul speak elsewhere of other "spirits," but we have already seen that this is refuted by the entire notion of a "discernment of the spirits" and by a passage such as Rom 8:9. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology,* 63n43.

27. I am not taking a position on the exceedingly complicated matter of the case, for which see the thorough discussion in Klaus Thraede, "Schwierigkeiten mit 1 Kor 5,1–13," *ZNW* 103 (2012): 177–211.

28. The phrase ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ("in the name of our lord Jesus") is often attached to the preceding verse 3 to mean that the action of the incestuous Corinthian has been committed as a purposeful demonstration of the freedom granted to those who are in Christ. However, such interpretation is grounded in a mirror-reading of the Corinthian opponents of Paul as libertines that is clearly eisegesis and thus hardly tenable anymore, as observed in Thraede, "Schwierigkeiten," 198–199.

29. Deissmann points towards PGM 5,335–336 (the great fourth-century papyrus of Paris), in which an anonymous is "given over" to a ghost (*nekydaimon*) in order to prevent him from doing something. See Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911), 302.

30. In particular, it is right to object, in the manner of James T. South, that an unparalleled occurrence in a fourth-century manuscript hardly constitutes evidence of technical terminology. However, the remnant of South's criticism is far less appropriate (in particular, when he distinguishes the "communal" context of the Pauline statement over against the "private" character of the "magical" texts). See South, "A Critique of the 'Curse/Death' Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1–8," *NTS* 39 (1993): 539–561.

31. Thus, South is certainly right in denying that Paul is specifically condemning the sinner to death, but, by the same token, he cannot also maintain that Paul is ordering his exclusion in order to save the man's soul. Thraede also remarks on the *distance* that

Paul is taking here from the man (never named), who is the main character in the case. South, "Critique"; Thraede, "Schwierigkeiten," 206.

32. Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," *HTR* 73 (1980): 259, developing a suggestion of Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (London: Black, 1969), 135n50.

33. "His repentance and rehabilitation are not explicitly excluded, but Paul does not seem to have been concerned about them." Collins, "Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," 259.

34. Διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δίς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Σατανᾶς ("Therefore we desired to come to you, even I Paul once and two times, but Satan hindered us"). On this passage, see Williams, *Spirit World,* 96–97.

35. This well-known aspect of the literary and theological structure of the writing has recently been analyzed in John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 317–365.

36. As in Acts 15:28: Ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ὑμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες ("It seemed right to the holy spirit and to us not to impose any further weight on you besides the necessary requirements").

37. Ἐπείραζον εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι καὶ οὐκ εἴασεν αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ ("They tried to enter Bithynia, but the spirit of Jesus did not let them"). Despite redaction criticism being a very dangerous exercise, it seems likely that here Luke is working with a multiplicity of sources. The true mettle of the Lukan redaction comes out immediately after this verse when the author describes Paul's dream of a "Macedonian man" calling for him to move on to Europe: the scene epitomizes quite effectively how Luke depersonalizes the πνεῦμα on the one hand and tries to recast its traditional activities in the forms of the ancient comic drama or novel on the other. For an important reflection on the Lukan redaction of some Gospel materials in connection with these themes, see Daniel A. Smith, "Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body): the Apologetic Interests of Luke 24:36–43," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 752–772.

38. The *Acts of Paul* are preserved only partially and the reconstruction of their original narrative order is still a matter of debate, on which see Willy Rordorf, *Ecrits apocryphes chrétiens,* ed. F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 1, 1115–1177; and Jeremy W. Barrier, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla: A Critical Introduction and Commentary* (WUNT 2/270; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008). On the second-century fights around the Pauline legacy, see Benjamin H. Dunning, *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); and Andrew Gregory, "The Acts of Paul and the Legacy of Paul," in *Paul and the Second Century,* ed. M. F. Bird and J. R. Dodson (LNTS 412; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 169–189.

39. Hamburg, Bibliothek Pap. Bil. 1 (LDAB 3138; TM 61979), in Carl Schmidt and Wilhelm Schubart, *Acta Pauli nach dem Papyrus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek* (Hamburg: J. J. Augustin, 1936). Datable to the second half of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, the papyrus comprises twenty-seven sheets from

a codex that contained the *Acts of Paul* in Greek, *Qohelet* in Greek and Coptic, and the *Song of Songs* and *Lamentations* in Coptic.

40. These two are the episode of David approaching Saul in the cave of En-Gedi (in 1 Sam 24) and that of the same David moving to kill Nabal from 1 Sam 25.

41. Interestingly, the terminology employed in this passage of the *Acts of Paul,* while clearly dependent on the authentic Pauline letters and the Gospels, preserves the same ambiguity observed above in the determination of the relationship between the "spirit" and the "hosts."

42. This is the suggestion of Rordorf in *Apocryphes,* 1, 1168, and it seems quite reasonable.

43. The choice of the verb καταστέλλω at this point is quite noteworthy, as its passive forms indicate quite clearly the act of restraining something unruly either physically or in regard to human emotions. Documentary papyri attest often to the use of the verb to indicate the placing under restraint of someone committing illegal actions, as in P.Sijp 14 (Philadelphia, 11th September 22 CE), a grammatically shoddy petition in which an anonymous asks that the two women who have robbed his or her daughter be put under custody (lines 11–14: διὸ ἀξ[ιῶ], ἀμ φαίνηται, συντάξαι τὰ[ς] ἐ[νκαλ] ου[μ]έν[α]ς κα[τ]αστ[αλ]θῆναι ἐπὶ σὲ). A use of the verb more focused on psychological phenomena surfaces in philosophical writings. Such is the case in Epictetus's *Dissertations* 4,4,8–10, in which the philosopher describes the attitude of spiritual balance that characterizes a wise person: "Why then are you not consistent in everything, both when you approach Caesar and when you approach So-and-so? If you are maintaining the character of a man of tranquility, of imperturbability, of sedateness (τὸν κατεσταλμένον), if you are observing what happens rather than being yourself observed, if you are not envying those who are preferred in honor above you, if the mere subject matter of actions does not dazzle you, what do you lack?"

44. Peter W. Dunn, "The Influence of 1 Corinthians on the *Acts of Paul,*" *SBLSP* 1996, 438–454, where the author also suggests a link to Acts 13:2–3 because of the presence of fasting in the context of a group meeting in which the πνεῦμα manifests itself to the assembled members.

45. "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged."

46. "As in all the assemblies of the saints, women should be silent in the assemblies. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says."

47. The best-known piece of evidence is that of the woman prophet mentioned in Tertullian's *De Anima,* on which see Laura S. Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (HTS 52; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 129–154. On the problems inherent in approaching the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* as witnesses to the actual social conditions of the Christ groups in the second century, see the reflections in Stephen J. Davis, "From Women's Piety to Male Devotion: Gender Studies, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla,* and the Evidence of an Arabic Manuscript," *HTR* 108 (2015): 579–593.

48. See the seminal contribution of Michael Lambek's article "The Sakalava Poiesis of History: Realizing the Past through Spirit Possession in Madagascar," *American Ethnologist*

25 (1998): 106–127, and the final four chapters of his previously mentioned *The Weight of the Past.*

49. Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 110–113.

50. "*Poiesis* is a useful word because, in its sense of making, it comprises what in much of social thought have been separated and opposed as the material and the ideal, production and creation, ritual and narrative, the making and the made." Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 111.

51. "Historical distance is measured, yet the distances are traversable in both directions (not only the present back toward the past, but the past forward to the present) and the gaze is not unidirectional. [. . .] The relationship with history is largely one of direct engagement, even embodiment, rather than of distanced objectification." Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 111.

52. For a good assessment of this long-standing issue, see the recent analysis in Luigi Walt, *Paolo e le parole di Gesù: frammenti di un insegnamento orale* (Antico e Nuovo Testamento 20; Brescia, Italy: Morcelliana, 2013). Walt sometimes appears too optimistic about the possibility of finding traces of the historical Jesus behind Pauline passages, but his careful examinations are always worth considering and instructive.

53. Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 112.

54. In recent years, scholars dealing with the so-called "quest" for the historical Jesus have become more and more aware of the impact of cultural differences on the formation and preservation of memories. Besides the fact that such new trends seem to have had little influence on Pauline studies, it appears that memory studies have often assumed a heavily apologetic stance, which limits their historiographical value. See for instance James D. G. Dunn, "Altering the Default Setting: Re-Envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition," *NTS* 49 (2003): 139–175. Others have given too little consideration to the current anthropological and neurobiological work on the subject, as observed in Zeba A. Crook, "Collective Memory Distortion and the Quest for the Historical Jesus," *JSHJ* 11 (2013): 53–76.

55. Eugene M. Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (NTSMS 46; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), with the latter's focus on forms and formulae, substantially responding to Ernst Käsemann, "Sätze heiligen Rechtes im Neuen Testament," in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 2:69–82.

56. It is worth stressing that, by focusing on *poiesis* at this juncture, one does not imply that other forms of historical memory were absent from the Pauline groups. In fact, it is likely that the members had access both to more "historiographical" (*theoria*) and more exclusively "productive" (*praxis*) types of memory keeping: the point advanced here is that *poiesis* should be factored in and that, given the central role played by possession in the Pauline groups, it probably had a major and underappreciated function.

57. Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 112–113.

58. Denise K. Buell, "Cyborg Memories: An Impure History of Jesus," *BibInt* 18 (2010): 313–341.

59. "The most salient events of the characters' lives to be inscribed in performance are their deaths, although this is by means of a series of negations. [. . .] The day of the week in which it occurred and the foods they ate over the last day are remembered by taboos impinging on their mediums. It appears that at each occasion of active possession the characters go *backwards* through their deaths in order to reestablish themselves as social actors. Mediums prepare to enter trance by applying white clay to the parts of the body whose traumata led to death. Often they must retreat under a shroud during the transition." Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 118.

60. Lambek, "Sakalava Poiesis," 117.

61. The representation illustrated above can be fruitfully compared with the way in which the classic *Formsgeschichtlich* approaches understood the role of early communities in the transmission and formation of the Gospel traditions. While the "history of the forms" should not be discounted as completely irrelevant, it bears emphasizing that the model presented here is radically different inasmuch as it presupposes a *poiesis* through possession (and thus concrete embodiment of Christ as πνεῦμα within the groups), which did not have any space in the classic reconstructions.

62. Hans D. Betz, "Transferring a Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6," in *Paulinische Studien: Gesammelte Aufsätze 3* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994), 240–271, followed by Jewett, *Romans,* 396–400.

63. On the use of the preposition εἰς in Rom 6:3, see Pino Di Luccio, "Il Battesimo *in* Cristo Gesù," *SBFLA* 65 (2015): 159–166.

64. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology,* 46–48. Even though the Danish exegete, who is otherwise so keen to emphasize the material and literal dimension of the activities of the πνεῦμα, ends up interpreting this and other passages in a merely cognitive direction, in large measure because of his choice to exclude possession from his treatment of the Pauline religious experience.

65. This is the interpretive path substantially chosen by Engberg-Pedersen among others, but see also Erich Gräßer, "Der Schatz in irdenen Gefäßen (2Kor 4,7): existentiale Interpretation im 2. Korintherbrief?" *ZTK* 97 (2000): 300–316. Gräßer is keen on underscoring the "reality" of the presence of Jesus's passion and death in Paul, but one can hardly see how "preaching" can prove an adequate medium for the communication of such a vivid "reality" to the members of the group.

66. See Maurice Carrez, "Que représente la vie de Jésus pour l'apôtre Paul?" *RHPR* 68 (1988): 155–161.

67. On this point, see now the insightful reading proposed in Cavan W. Concannon, "'Not for an Olive Wreath, but Our Lives': Gladiators, Athletes, and Early Christian Bodies," *JBL* 133 (2014): 208–212, further expanded in James R. Unwin, "'Thrown Down, but Not Destroyed': Paul's Use of a Spectacle Metaphor in 2 Corinthians 4:7–15," *NT* 57 (2015): 379–412.

68. See, for instance, Thomas Schmeller, *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 8; Patmos, Greece: Neukirchen, 2010), 1, 263 and the literature referenced therein.

69. It is important to note that both Bultmann and Käsemann (otherwise presented as opposites in so many respects) shared this very mistrust and exercised an enormous influence on later exegetes, as is illustrated by this sentence of Bultmann's (quoted with approval in Gräßer, "Schatz," 311): "Er, Paulus, ist also für die Hörer zum Christus selbst geworden; aber nicht weil er vergottet wäre und von ihnen als Pneumatiker angestaunt würde, sondern weil er ihnen predigte." Adhering to this paradigm ultimately leads Gräßer himself down the veritable rabbit hole of demonstrating that Christ was "really" present in Paul, but at the same time the apostle never became a *Christus prolongatus.* See also Ernst Käsemann, "Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament," in *Exegetische,* 1, 109–134.

70. A similar interpretation was already advanced in C. Merrill Proudfoot, "Imitation or Realistic Participation? A Study of Paul's Concept of 'Suffering with Christ,'" *Interpretation* 17 (1963): 140–160.

71. Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 335.

72. Jan Lambrecht, "The Nekrôsis of Jesus Ministry and Suffering in 2 Cor 4, 7–15," in *L'Apôtre Paul: personnalité, style et conception du ministère,* ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1986), 137–138.

73. For instance, Frank J. Matera can gloss over this crucial point by saying that "the precise meaning of what Paul means by death and life in these verses is disputed." Matera, "Apostolic Suffering and Resurrection Faith: Distinguishing between Appearance and Reality (2 Cor 4,7–5,10)," in *Resurrection in the New Testament: Festschrift J. Lambrecht,* ed. R. Bieringer, V. Koperski, and B. Lataire (BETL 165; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2002), 398.

74. "For Paul, to know Jesus Christ is to manifest the power of Jesus' crucifixion in one's body through spirit possession and performance characterized by possession phenomena." Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 319–320.

75. On this point, see Lambrecht, "Nekrôsis."

76. Also on the strength of the other Pauline occurrence of the same word in Rom 4:19 (with reference to τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας, "the death of Sara's womb," which cannot refer to a process), on which see Thrall, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary,* 331–332.

77. Schmeller, *Der Zweite Brief,* 262.

78. Such an interpretation of the Greek word is defended by John T. Fitzgerald, who does not consider possession, however, but privileges the theme of Paul's willing assumption of the hardships in order to bolster his own apostolic role. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 178–179.

79. Most scholars who build on this assumption conclude that Paul's apostolic suffering possesses a sort of salvific function with respect to the other Christ believers (and thus, as noted above for Gräßer, they end up having trouble distinguishing Paul from Jesus). As we will see in the next chapter, such an impression is warranted because the apostle (even when one considers only πνεῦμα possession) tends to represent his own experi-

ence as somewhat different (and perhaps better) than that of other Christ believers, but it is incumbent on critical scholarship to resist the thrust of Pauline rhetoric on this point.

80. Schmeller, *Der Zweite Brief,* 265.

81. 2 Cor 1:6a: εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας· εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως ("If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and preservation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation").

82. 2 Cor 1:6b-7: Τῆς ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων ὧν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν [. . .] εἰδότες ὅτι ὡς κοινωνοί ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων, οὕτως καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως ("[The consolation] that is operative in the endurance of your suffering that we too are suffering [. . .] knowing that as you are sharer of the sufferings, likewise you are also sharer of the consolation").

83. An obvious reference would be to Phil 3:11–12, in which Paul explains his desire "to be found in Christ" as "knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead [κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, εἴ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τήν ἐκ νεκρῶν]."

84. Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 320–321n24.

85. Basil S. Davis, "The Meaning of ΠΡΟΕΓΡΑΦΗ in the Context of Galatians 3.1," *NTS* 45 (1999): 194–212.

86. On the visual experience presupposed here, see also David L. Balch, "The Suffering of Isis/Io and Paul's Portrait of Christ Crucified (Gal 3:1): Frescoes in Pompeian and Roman Houses and in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii," *JR* 83 (2003): 25–55; and Balch, "Paul's Portrait of Christ's Crucified (Gal 3:1) in Light of Paintings and Sculptures of Suffering and Death in Pompeian and Roman Houses," in *Early Christian Families in Context: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue,* ed. David L. Balch and C. Osiek (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 84–109.

87. Ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως ("Does the one who supplies you with the spirit and work miracles in you do this in force of the works of the law or of faithful listening?").

88. Heidi Wendt, "Galatians 3:1 as an Allusion to Textual Prophecy," *JBL* 135 (2016): 369–389. It is worth noting that, as Wendt herself acknowledges, the linguistic basis for this reading of προγράφω is quite slim.

89. This element has been explored chiefly by Jerome H. Neyrey, who suggests that the pneumatic manifestation of Christ's crucifixion might have worked as an antidote to the evil eye. Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 72–100.

90. Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω, ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω ("From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus in my body"). See the very "irregular" gesture toward "traditional Catholic piety" (for St. Francis!) in Williams, *Spirit World,* 215–216.

91. See the discussion in Davis, "Meaning," 198–199.

92. Betz, *Galatians,* 224–226.

93. See the similar move in Martyn, *Galatians,* 421.

94. Halvor Moxnes, "Asceticism and Christian Identity in Antiquity: A Dialogue with Foucault and Paul," *JSNT* 26 (2003): 3–29.

95. A similar subtext runs behind the long discussion on the meats sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8–10 and the pericope of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, whose Pauline authenticity is discussed, but with unconvincing arguments, since the cluster contains both the themes of the Christ group as temple of the πνεῦμα and that of discernment of the "spirits." For a good analysis of the latter pericope, see Levison, *Filled,* 300–306.

96. For an interesting parallel case of Mayotte mediums living in France and observing traditional food taboos there in their grocery shopping habits (for instance, concerning chicken), see Michael Lambek, "Rheumatic Irony: Questions of Agency and Self-deception as Refracted through the Art of Living with Spirits," in *Illness and Irony: On the Ambiguity of Suffering in Culture,* ed. Michael Lambek and P. Antze (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 40–59.

97. In this light, it is appropriate to follow Denise Buell's lead and correct Dale Martin's assessment of this theme in *1 Corinthians* to the effect that Paul's crucial message for the Corinthians "is not about protecting one's closed boundaries, but negotiating one's inevitable porousness 'correctly.'" Buell, "Microbes and Pneuma," 301n41.

98. Adeline Masquelier, "Narratives of Power, Images of Wealth: The Ritual Economy of *Bori* in the Market," in *Modernity and Its Malcontents,* ed. Comaroff and Comaroff, 3–33.

99. In this regard one might interpret the otherwise puzzling aside of Paul in 1 Cor 11:27–30 ("Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the blood and body of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.").

100. "It is not so that a man is the master of his body, so that he can shape it according to his wishes. To speak in modern terms, a body does not have an 'essence' in itself; it does not possess an ontological identity. [. . .] And the primary determination of the male body is that it is a member of Christ's body. This is not understood intellectually, in terms of world-view, but in terms of an inclusion into another corporeal existence." Moxnes, "Asceticism," 23.

101. Moxnes, "Asceticism," 25.

102. For a hint in this direction, see Williams, *Spirit World,* 216–217.

103. Ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ("To reveal his son in me, so that I might proclaim him among the peoples"). Scholars debate whether ἐν ἐμοί ought to be translated either as "in me" or "to me," but the latter option is clearly inferior because of the occurrence of the same formula later on in Gal 2:20 and because it seems to have originated mainly as a means to avoid traces of Pauline "mysticism." On this issue, see Williams, *Spirit World,* 214; and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm," *NT* 28 (1986): 309–326.

104. Engberg-Pedersen provides a very insightful reading of this passage, even though he employs inappropriate language of "conversion" and as usual shies away from talking of possession. Puzzlingly, the Danish author can state that "the issue here is not one of (ontological) individualism, nor of a modern existentialism. If we want to talk about ontology, we should do it in the terms elaborated earlier in this book, of reception in the individual body of pneuma literally coming from above" and then retreat into a purely rhetorical level of analysis. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology,* 157–162, quotation 158n40. An additional Pauline passage worth mentioning at this juncture is Phil 3:12 (which immediately follows on the other *Philippians* passage examined in the preceding section): "Not that I have already obtained it [the resurrection from the dead through the sharing of Jesus's sufferings] or have already become perfected, but I press on to see if I can grasp (καταλάβω) it, just as I have also been grasped (κατελήμφθην) by Christ Jesus." The use of the verb καταλαμβάνω is a very appropriate linguistic means to express the forceful subjection of the self to the Christ πνεῦμα.

105. J. Albert Harrill, "The Slave Self: Paul and the Discursive 'I,'" in *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 17–33. Harrill is working primarily on Rom 7 and is rightly cautious on the risks inherent in taking the contents of a speech-in-character as an immediate representation of psychological realities. This is certainly appropriate for Rom 7, but one could maintain that in other places Paul is using slavery imagery to confabulate about a *real* experience of possession. However, it is worth considering the treatment of Rom 7 in Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 216–229, as well as the brief but important remarks in Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires,* 54–55.

106. Harrill correctly insists on the need to take seriously both the apocalyptic nature and the Roman context of Paul's speech in Rom 7: "For Paul baptism is the concrete ritual moment moving the catechumen away from an "I" (the subject of the individual as the normative locus) and toward identification of that subject with Christ. [. . .] The Pauline view of God's mastery recognizes the subjectivity and agency of the converted religious self and sees that true authority consists not in obeying individual commands—as in the automaton who misunderstands, and who obeys only literal instructions of the law—but in total directness toward God." Harrill, "Self," 30.

107. On the cultural trends influencing the encoding of the experience related here, see Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "Paul's Rapture: 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 and the Language of the Mystics," in *Experientia, Volume 1: Sites for Inquiry for Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. F. Flannery, C. Shantz, and R. A. Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 159–176. On the controversial translation of ἄρρητα ῥήματα, see also Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 91–93.

108. On the nature of this experience, see Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 321; and Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, "The Heavenly Journey in Paul: Tradition of a Jewish Apocalyptic Literary Genre or Cultural Practice in a Hellenistic-Roman Context?" in *Paul's Jewish Matrix,* ed. T. G. Casey and J. Taylor (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011), 167–200; and Matteo Tubiana, "Il viaggio celeste in Paolo: un pattern per l'interpretazione di un'esperienza?" *ASE* 29 (2012): 83–117.

109. Lietaert Peerbolte defends his understanding of this phrase as an objective genitive by appealing to Gal 1:16, but—as we have seen above—there the reference to a revelation "in" Paul indicates possession on the part of the Christ πνεῦμα. Obviously, this does not preclude that the content of the visions and revelations of 2 Cor 12:1 may still have been Jesus Christ. Peerbolte, "Rapture," 168–169.

110. For a review of the extensive literature that has accrued on this passage through the centuries, see David Abernathy, "Paul's Thorn in the Flesh: A Messenger of Satan?" *Neotestamentica* 35 (2001): 69–79; and Adela Yarbro Collins, "Paul's Disability: The Thorn in His Flesh," in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature,* ed. C. R. Moss and J. Schipper (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 165–183.

111. Max Krenkel, *Beiträge zur Aufhellung der Geschichte und der Briefe des Apostels Paulus,* 2nd edition (Braunschweig, Germany: Schwetschke, 1895), 47–125.

112. Despite the undeniable sensitivity with which Collins approaches the theme of disability at this juncture. See Collins, "Thorn," 175–176.

113. Abernathy, "Thorn," 71. I cannot, however, agree with the direction in which Abernathy pushes the rest of his argument, that is, once again towards Pauline apostolic heroism by way of an overconfident reliance on the historical reliability of the *Acts of the Apostles.*

114. This is the scenario sketched also in Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 321, and in the rich reading offered in Justin M. Glessner, "Ethnomedical Anthropology and Paul's 'Thorn' (2 Corinthians 12:7)," *BTB* 47 (2017): 15–46.

115. Lisa M. Bowens, *An Apostle in Battle: Paul and Spiritual Warfare in 2 Corinthians 12:1–10* (WUNT 2/433; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2017).

116. Guy Williams too rejects strongly the attempts to demythologize the "angel of Satan," but then concludes that this figure should be understood as that of a guardian "spirit" tasked with prohibiting Paul from completing his heavenly journey by going beyond the third heaven. Williams, *Spirit World,* 105–109; see also Paula R. Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 and Heavenly Ascent* (LNTS 313; London: T&T Clark, 2006). However, there is nothing in the Pauline passage indicating that the journey of verses 2–4 is failed or even that the two instances refer to the same ecstatic episode: on the contrary, it seems likely that Paul himself has created the juxtaposition for the overall rhetorical purposes of 2 Cor 10–12.

117. For a good analysis of the parodic tour-de-force characterizing the so-called "fool's speech" in 2 Cor 10–12, see Laurence L. Welborn, "The Runaway Paul," *HTR* 92 (1999): 115–163, developed—for the verses under consideration here—in M. David Litwa, "Paul's Mosaic Ascent: An Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12.7–9," *NTS* 57 (2011): 238–257.

CHAPTER 5. WILL THEY NOT SAY THAT YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR MIND?

1. Sarah Goldingay, "To Perform Possession and to Be Possessed in Performance: The Actor, the Medium, and the 'Other,'" in *Spirit Possession and Trance,* ed. Schmidt and Huskinson, 205–222.

2. See, for instance, some of the contributions collected in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theater and Ritual,* ed. R. Schechner and W. Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990).

3. Kristina Wirtz, *Ritual, Discourse, and Community in Cuban Santería: Speaking a Sacred World* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2007).

4. Goldingay, "To Perform Possession," 209.

5. Thus, one can see that the most recent and most authoritative academic writing on these subjects concludes that almost nothing can be said about these all-important sacraments before the fourth century CE, when the sources at our disposal start to become more substantial both in number and quality. See Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2010).

6. For a thorough summary of the very rich materials on exorcism, see now Andrea Nicolotti, *Esorcismo cristiano e possessione diabolica tra II e III secolo* (Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia 54; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011).

7. Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16," 324.

8. The majority of the exegetes holds the above-mentioned position, but there are also important exceptions; see, in particular, the recent treatment offered in Mount, 1 Corinthians 11: 3–16, 323–325.

9. Andreas Lindemann, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), 262, reacting to Hermann Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des Heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus: eine biblisch-theologische Studie* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1888).

10. See the discussion in Clint Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14* (WUNT 2/230; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2007), 148–154, reacting to Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

11. See the discussion in Tibbs, *Religious Experience,* 170–174.

12. While the critical debate around Paul's potential binitarianism has become extremely vivid over the few last decades (as a reaction to the success of books like Larry Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ* that must be understood as an attempt to reverse the scholarly consensus—established as early as one hundred years ago by works related to the German *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*—concerning Paul's opinion about Jesus's own divinity), the same cannot be said for Paul's trinitarianism. Despite very limited disagreeing voices, the issue is rarely discussed and the consensus seems to hold that Paul had not developed yet the notion of a *single* Holy Spirit.

13. Most clearly in Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre and Laura S. Nasrallah, "Beyond the Heroic Paul: Toward a Feminist and Decolonizing Approach to the Letters of Paul," in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes,* ed. C. D. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 161–174.

14. For well-known applications of this methodological approach, see John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73–93; and Nijay K. Gupta, "Mirror-Reading Moral Issues in Paul's Letters," *JSNT* 34 (2012): 361–381.

15. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 14–15, but see also the more recent presentation of the same reasoning in Sung Bok Choi, *Geist und christliche Existenz: Das Glossolalieverständnis des Paulus im Ersten Korintherbrief (1 Kor 14)* (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener, 2007), 118–122. Even Ashton seems to be strangely beholden to this "enthusiastic" understanding of the Corinthians. Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 203–206.

16. For some scathing critical observations, see Stanley K. Stowers, "Kinds of Myth, Meals, and Power: Paul and the Corinthians," in *Redescribing Paul,* ed. Cameron and Miller, 107–109.

17. This solution looks all the more incongruous when one considers that the portrayal of "prophets" in the Hebrew Bible stresses the "irrational" character of their behavior; see, for instance, the case of "Saul among the prophets" in 1 Sam 10 and 19.

18. Mount, 1 Corinthians 11: 3–16, 313–340. While Mount's analysis of the role played by spirit possession in the Pauline groups is almost entirely convincing, even though his conclusions with respect to the origins of 1 Cor 11:3–16 go a step further in a direction that the present author finds more difficult to follow, mainly on text critical grounds (and are anyway not very relevant for the subject matters of this book).

19. Mount, 319.

20. Mount, 319–320.

21. See, for instance, the long discussion in Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and Its Hellenistic Environment* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997).

22. That is the case, for instance, in Elim Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26–40: Relevance Beyond the Corinthian Church* (LNTS 406; London: T&T Clark, 2010).

23. See, for instance for the less immediately evident case of glossolalia, the fulsome collection of texts provided in John C. Poirer, *The Tongues of Angels: The Concept of Angelic Languages in Classical Jewish and Christian Texts* (WUNT 2/287; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010).

24. Stephen J. Chester, "Divine Madness? Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14.23," *JSNT* 27 (2005): 417–446.

25. Concannon, *"When You Were Gentiles,"* 16–17 and throughout.

26. On the well-calibrated deployment of "foreign" traits (and Jewish ones in particular) on the part of "freelance religious experts," such as Paul, see the impressive analysis in Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 2.

27. Glossolalia occurs famously in Act 2 in the episode of Pentecost, but there are plenty of attestations to the fact that the phenomenon remained well alive in the second century CE, including the long ending of Mark (16:17) and a statement of Irenaeus of Lyon. On this section, see Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 25–33.

28. See the literature in Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 40–42.

29. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation,* 266–283.

30. Ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσῃ ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ, ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ ("The one who speaks in tongues edifies himself, while the one who prophesizes edifies the group").

31. Ἐὰν οὖν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς, ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος ("If then I do not know the meaning of a sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me"). See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation,* 280n527, reacting to Jerome H. Neyrey, "Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and His Opponents," *Semeia* 35 (1986): 129–170.

32. Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly,* 91–94.

33. 1 Cor 14:14: Ἐὰν προσεύχωμαι γλώσσῃ, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν ("If I pray in tongues, my spirit prays, but my mind is inactive"). It must be noted that Paul never says—at this juncture or anywhere else—the opposite, that the spirit is not implicated in "prophecy," only that "prophecy" arguably implicates both mind and spirit.

34. Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly,* 94.

35. 1 Cor 13:8–10: "Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end." See Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly,* 87–90.

36. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation,* 165–171.

37. 1 Cor 12:28: "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers." On the implications of this numbering, see Ashton, *Religion of Paul the Apostle,* 206–211; and Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 41n64, and the literature mentioned therein.

38. 1 Cor 14:18–19: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

39. 1 Cor 14:37: Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστίν ἐντολή ("If one appears to be a prophet or a "spiritual one," one shall acknowledge that what I write to you is a commandment of the Lord").

40. Walt, *Paolo,* 286–287; and Christian Stettler, "The 'Command of the Lord' in 1 Cor 14,37—a Saying of Jesus?" *Biblica* 87 (2006): 42–51.

41. Thomas W. Gillespie, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

42. Gillespie's hypothesis is ultimately undermined by his insistence in making "theologians" (with the category understood in a "neo-orthodox" sense that is inherently limiting) of the Corinthian Christ believers; see the apt criticism in Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly,* 92n91.

43. This hypothesis is argued extensively in Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and in Its Hellenistic Environment* (WUNT 2/75; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995).

44. Act 10:45–46: "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God."

45. For this and other arguments *contra* Forbes, see Bazzana, *Autorità e successione,* 29–33.

46. For a recent discussion of this point, see Hans-Josef Klauck, "Mit Engelszungen? Vom Charisma der verständlichen Rede in 1Kor 14," *ZTK* 97 (2000): 276–299.

47. Most of these texts are conveniently assembled and discussed in detail in John C. Poirier, *The Tongues of Angels: The Concept of Angelic Languages in Classical Jewish and Christian Texts* (WUNT 2/287; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010). Poirier's conclusion is that Paul in 1 Cor 12–14 is referring to angelic tongues.

48. On these grounds it appears misleading to conceive—as done famously and influentially by Ernest Käsemann—of 1 Cor 14 as a sort of Pauline "hymn to reason" following immediately the "hymn to love" contained in 1 Cor 13. Ernst Käsemann, "Sätze heiligen Rechtes im Neuen Testament," *NTS* 1 (1954–1955): 248–260.

49. For instance, mixed with the description of the Corinthians as "proto-Gnostics," in Richard A. Horsley, "Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224–239.

50. For a recent discussion of the problem, see Bart L. F. Kamphius, Jan L. H. Krans, Silvia Castelli, and Bert J. L. Peerbolte, "Sleepy Scribes and Clever Critics: A Classification of Conjectures on the Text of the New Testament," *NT* 57 (2015): 87–88.

51. Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

52. Dale B. Martin, "Tongues of Angels and Other Status Indicators," *JAAR* 59 (1991): 547–589. The essay was later reprinted with marginal modifications in Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University, 1995).

53. Martin, despite his own admission of the slippery nature of the category of "status," often transitions from "status" to "class" and back with an easiness that may be problematic. Martin, "Angels," 550–551.

54. "We can say, however, that even though esoteric speech seems to mean different things in different social contexts, it is usually considered a high status activity *except* in western, rationalistic societies in which tongue-speaking is taken as evidence of ignorance, lowly origins, and a susceptibility to "enthusiasm"—to which the lower class is presumed to be especially prone." Martin, "Angels," 556.

55. Freeman, "Dynamics of the Person," 155.

56. Karin Kapadia, "Pierced by Love: Tamil Possession, Gender and Caste," in *Invented Identities: The Interplay of Gender, Religion and Politics in India,* ed. J. Leslie and M. McGee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181–202.

57. Smith, *Self Possessed,* 3–29.

58. As Martin himself states in his conclusions. Martin, "Angels," 580.

59. The latter task is daunting, but newer publications seem to give us hope for the future; see, for instance, *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality,* ed. S. J. Friesen, S. A. James, and D. N. Schowalter (SupplNT 155; Leiden: Brill, 2014); and J. R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, eds., *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016).

60. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation,* 157–164.

61. Martin shows very well how this—like any other reasoning based on "common sense"—hides the fact that the relationship is completely the opposite: the hierarchy

of body parts is not self-evident at all but is built on the basis of a social hierarchy. Martin, "Angels," 564–565.

62. Andreas Lindemann, "Die Kirche als Leib: Beobachtungen zur 'demokratischen' Ekklesiologie bei Paulus," *ZTK* 92 (1995): 140–165.

63. Martin, "Angels," 567–568.

64. Livy, *History from the Foundation of the City* 2,33.

65. See, for instance, several of the essays included in J. M. Mageo and A. Howard, eds., *Spirits in Culture, History, and Mind* (London: Routledge, 1996).

66. Kristina Wirtz, "'Where Obscurity is a Virtue': The Mystique of Unintelligibility in Santería Ritual," *Language and Communication* 25 (2005): 351–375.

67. On the regime of temporality operating here, see Kristina Wirtz, "The Living, the Dead, and the Immanent: Dialogue across Chronotopes," *Hau* 6 (2016): 343–369.

68. Ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν Αββα ὁ πατήρ ("You received a spirit of adoption in which we cry 'Abba, father'"). On glossolalia in this passage, see Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy,* 127–131.

69. Ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κράζον Αββα ὁ πατήρ ("God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, shouting "Abba, father").

70. John Poirier has collected several texts that identify the "divine language" of glossolalia as Hebrew and, even though he does not consider 1 Cor 13:1 among them, there is actually nothing in the verse or in its context that can exclude the possibility. Poirier, *Tongues of Angels,* 9–30.

71. Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

72. See Wirtz, "Obscurity," 353, where the German anthropologist builds on the earlier theoretical work of Malinowski and Austin on "performativity."

73. Most influentially in Walter Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth: eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen,* 3rd ed. (FRLANT 66; Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969).

74. Heidi Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

75. I am referring here to the title (substituting the traditional *De Mysteriis*) and dating proposed in Jamblique, *Réponse à Porphyre (De Mysteriis)*, ed. H. D. Saffrey and A. P. Segonds (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2013).

76. Iamblichus, *Response to Porphyry* 7,4.

77. This aspect of Imablichus's response is well illustrated in Crystal Addey, "Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: 'Unknowable Names' and Invocations in Late Antique Theurgic Rituals," in *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy, and Religion,* ed. A. P. M. H. Lardinois, J. H. Blok, and M. G. M. van der Poel (Mnemosyne 332; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 279–294, developing an intervention of Patricia Cox Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman,* ed. A. H. Armstrong (London: Routledge, 1986), 481–505.

78. Iamblichus, *Response to Porphyry* 7,4.

79. On the Jewish scriptural quotation, see Otto Betz, "Zungenreden und süßer Wein: Zur eschatologischen Exegese von Jes 28 in Qumran und im Neuen Testament," in *Jesus—der Herr der Kirche: Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie II* (WUNT 52; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 49–65.

80. Mauro Pesce, "La profezia cristiana come anticipazione del giudizio escatologico in 1 Cor. 14,24–25," in *Testimonium Christi: scritti in onore di Jacques Dupont* (Brescia, Italy: Paideia, 1985), 379–438.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Buell, "Microbes and Pneuma," 66.

2. Such a radical contradiction in modernity had been already diagnosed in a seminal way in Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

3. For instance, this seems to be what happens with the issue of historicity in the study of Jesus in Craffert, *Life of a Galilean Shaman,* chs. 1–3. This limitation of some anthropological approaches is well diagnosed in Oliver J. T. Harris and John Robb, "Multiple Ontologies and the Problem of the Body in History," *American Anthropologist* 114 (2012): 668–679: "Indeed anthropologists risk patronizing the people we study if we insist that their reality has no necessary relation to a material world and hence that they cannot be keen empiricists and effective practical agents—or that they do so in their spare time, when not pursuing a quintessential alterity" (669).

4. Michael Lambek, "Provincializing God? Provocations from an Anthropology of Religion," in *Religion: Beyond a Concept,* ed. H. de Vries (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 120–138. Lambek's proposal is obviously inspired by and developed in partial contrast with Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

5. As Buell, for instance, has written: "I understand part of the impulse to animal studies and within post-and trans-humanism to be a critique of understandings and practices of subjectivity, agency, and being that are seen to have had devastating results such as oppression among humans (racism, sexism, heterosexism, genocide, imperialism), destruction of many nonhuman species and their habitats, and poisoning of the environment." Buell, "Microbes and Pneuma," 295.

6. There is little doubt that in her foundational study of *zar* cults, Janice Boddy was right to see more in the phenomenon than the mere function as "safety valve" for social marginalization envisaged by Ioan Lewis. Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zâr Cults in Northern Sudan* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

7. Stephan Palmié, "Historicist Knowledge and Its Conditions of Impossibility," in *Social Life of Spirits,* ed. Blanes and Espírito Santo, 218–239; and Michael Lambek, "The Sakalava Poiesis of History: Realizing the Past through Spirit Possession in Madagascar," *American Ethnologist* 25 (1998): 106–127.

8. See Denise Kimber Buell, "Cyborg Memories: an Impure History of Jesus," *BibInt* 18 (2010): 313–341.

9. It appears that by and large this judgment holds true also for the current interest for memory studies applied to topics such as the quest for the historical Jesus. By emphasizing the role of possession in mediating the past in the early Christ groups, I do not want to exclude the possibility of the coexistence of other conduits, some of them even maybe very similar to modern historiography: the ethnographic literature shows that the concomitant presence of several different paradigms is common.

10. Such an aspect has been repeatedly emphasized by Lambek in his many contributions, but see also the carefully described case in Masquelier, "From Hostage to Host."

11. See Michael Lambek, "How to Make Up One's Mind: Reason, Passion, and Ethics in Spirit Possession," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 79 (2010): 720–741.

12. On the contrast between possession and the western tradition of secularization of the body, see Moxnes, "Ethnography," 332–334. Denise Kimber Buell's reflections on the "porous" nature of early Christian subjectivities with their consequences for the conceptualization of agency are also valuable. Buell, "Imagining Human Transformation in the Context of Invisible Powers: Instrumental Agency in Second-Century Treatments of Conversion," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body, and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (Ekstasis 1; Berlin: De Gruyter 2009), 249–270.

13. See Giovanni B. Bazzana, "Il corpo della carne di Gesù Cristo (POxy I 5): conflitti ecclesiologici nel cristianesimo del II secolo," *Adamantius* 10 (2004): 100–122.

14. See Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires.*

15. See David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); and Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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